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50 Dives
50 States

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the nation's best dives

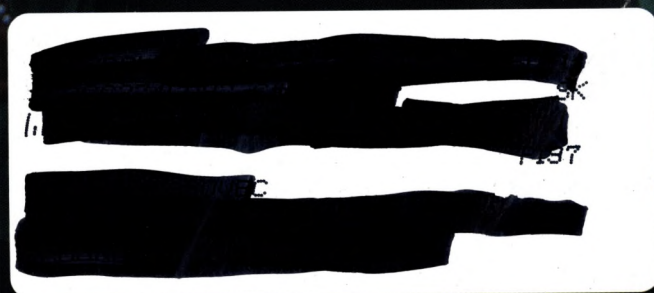
**The Strong Arm
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Getting more depth for your dime
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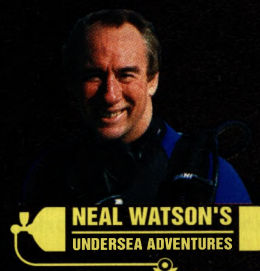
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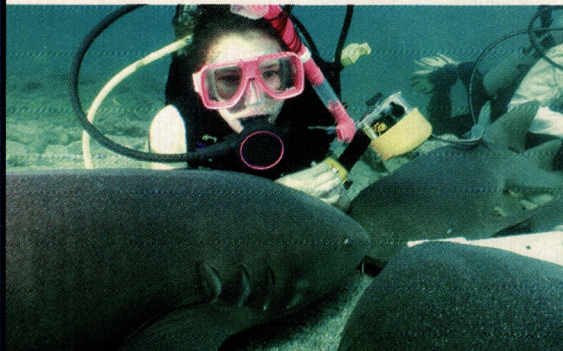
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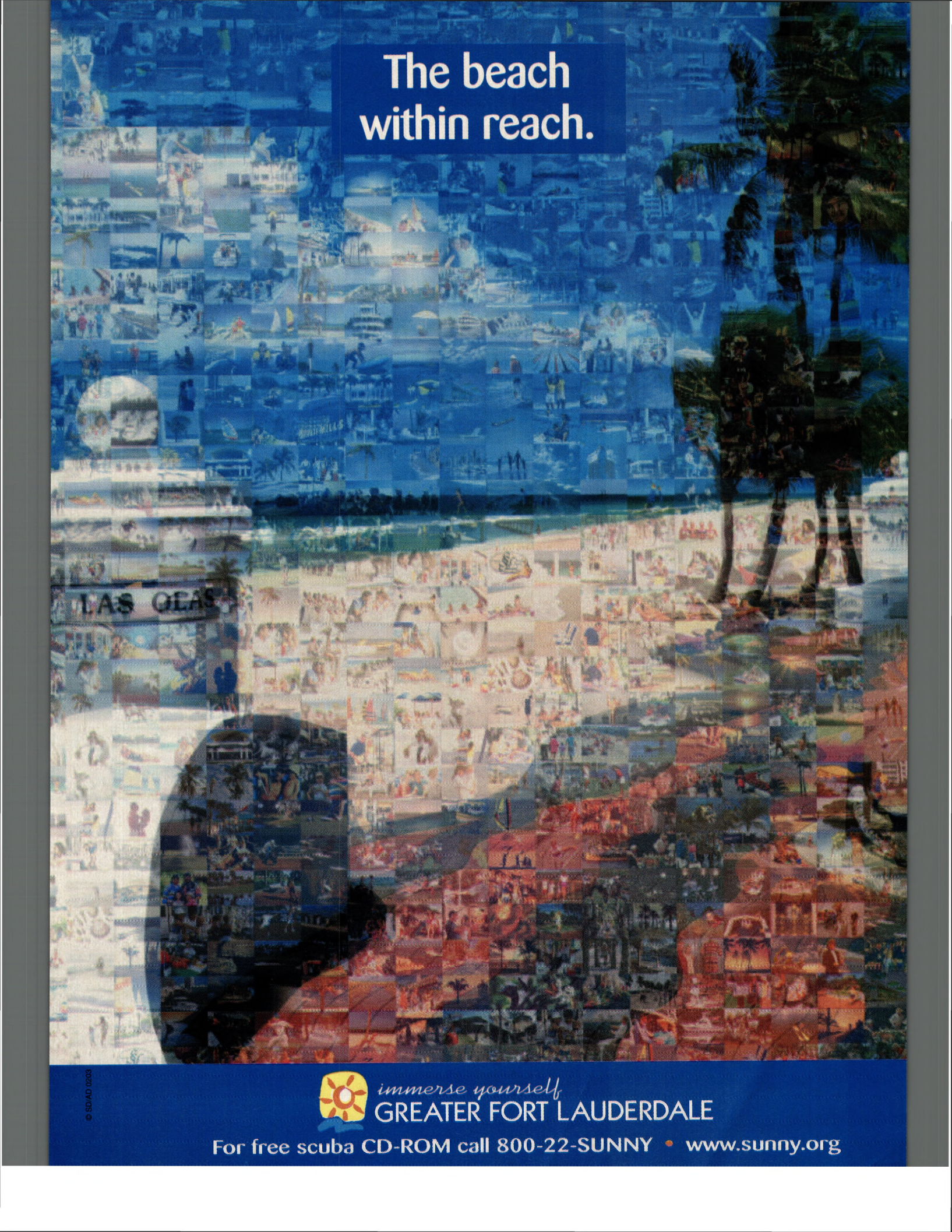
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features

- 34 LICKETY-SPLIT!**
With the snap of his fins, DARYL CARSON cuts to the core of split fin mania by dissecting 11 of the speediest foot propellers available.
- 46 ROATAN PHOTO AND VIDEO COMPETITION**
When pros and novices get busy in the Bay Islands—competition turns to camaraderie, and everyone is a winner!

THE STRONG ARM OF THE DOLLAR

- 50 MALAYSIA'S MAGNIFICENT KINGDOMS**
AL HORNSBY exchanges his pennies for top dollar dive sites and jungle dreams in Malaysia.
- 54 THAI SPICE**
Thailand serves MARK STRICKLAND a sampling of diving delicacies—luscious coral gardens, saucy cuttlefish and a cornucopia of everything “from snails to whales.”

- 60 50 DIVES IN 50 STATES**
So, your passport fell in the water and was eaten by a Blue Tang on your last dive trip? No worries. *Skin Diver* has 50 great dives for you to do—right here, right now—in the U.S. of A.

- 76 THE MANY MOODS OF CAYMAN**
With her inquisitive and skillful camera lens, CATHY CHURCH shows that emotions run deep in her own backyard—the waters of the Cayman Islands.

- 102 BRING A FRIEND**
TIFFANY CAREY unveils the age-old secret of how to make money and save money at the same time, as *Skin Diver* and PADI team up for the new Bring a Friend Program.

ABOUT THE COVER:

A Giant Octopus takes hold at Keystone Jetty off Whidbey Island, WA. PHOTO: DAVID FLEETHAM

Background photo:

Gearing up on the dive platform of Utah's unique and warm-watered (96°F) Homestead Crater. PHOTO: TY SAWYER

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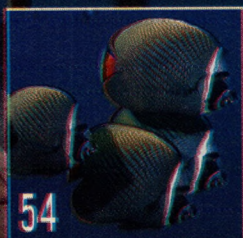
departments

- 12 **EDITORIAL** by Ty Sawyer
- 18 **LETTERS TO THE EDITOR**
- 20 **FREEFLOW** edited by Tiffany H. Carey
Diving's Latest News
- 22 **ENVIRONMENT** by Jean-Michel Cousteau
Fish Stories
- 24 **ASK THE PRO** by Marty Snyderman
Shutter Lag: A Digital Dilemma
- 28 **NEWT FRONTIERS** by Phil Nuytten
Reaching Beyond the Now
- 28 **DIVER'S LIBRARY** by Michelle Danner
- 31 **SKIN DIVER ONLINE** by Michelle Danner
Skin Diver Events
- 32 **GEAR AND GADGETS** by Ryan Allen & Ty Sawyer

- 40 **BLUE ADVENTURES FOR KIDS** by Wyland
Manatee Madness
- 89 **TOTALLY TEK** by Karl Shreeves
Drinking on the Job
- 104 **ENCOUNTERS** by Denise Nielsen Tackett & Larry Tackett
The Golden Wentletrap
- 105 **TIME CAPSULES** by Tiffany H. Carey
- 106 **DIVE TALES** by Fred D. Garth
Whale Watching

directories

- 84 Travel Guide
- 86 Overseas Divers' Directory
- 91 Advertiser Directory, *Skin Diver* Link
- 92 Internet Directory
- 94 Marketplace



CAYMAN ISLANDS Remember those mood rings from the '70s that changed colors to reflect the wearer's mood? Nifty idea, but did they ever really work? Not if you consider being happy a *navy* hue. So when *Skin Diver* decided to create an accurate mood pictorial of the Cayman Islands, we knew that Cathy Church—shooting these gems since mood rings were the fashion—was a perfect fit (pg 76).



50 DIVES IN 50 STATES It's been said that if you're searching for something and it seems particularly difficult to find, chances are it's right under your nose. And so it is with great diving. Feeling a bit skeptical? Great diving in the Land of Lincoln (Illinois), among the cows of the great cheese



state (Wisconsin) and the bluegrass backyards of Kentucky and Tennessee? "Oh yeah? Show me," you said. And *Skin Diver* happily accepted the challenge and ventured out to find that some of the clearest blue water, coolest submerged forests and buried lost towns (and old Chevys) are just a burger and shake away. Sure, you might have to don a full-on 7 mm wetsuit along with booties, gloves and a hooded vest; you may even have to lug your own gear from the parking lot. Call it a reality check and find out for yourself what we did. We double-dare ya (pg 60).

MALAYSIA AND THAILAND If you're like me after the holidays, and find yourself heaving that huge plastic money jug of loose change into the grocery store in hopes of affording your next dive vacation, have we got news for you. Two of the most sought-after dive spots are yours for the taking, and it won't cause you to take



out another mortgage. Cerulean waters give way to vast varieties of marine life and small cities of reef and sponges. In Malaysia, experience Hanging Gardens, a mammoth wall dive where Hawksbill, Ridley and Green Turtles infest the waters. In Thailand, Cuttlefish can be seen in groups of two and three, frolicking about in a viz that seems endless. Either way, that loose change will go a long way (pg 50).



ROATAN What could be a better canvas for creating or adding to a diver's U/W photography portfolio than the Bay Islands? Almost 70 divers jumped in with cameras and strobes in tow at the Roatan Photo and Video Competition. Top pros gave advice and presentations and judged the winners. Check out the event's top picks (pg 46).



SCOTT D. JONES has been a regular contributor to *Skin*

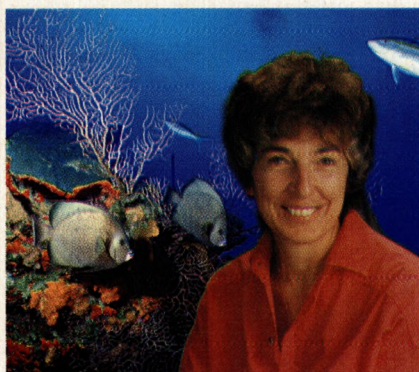


CONTRIBUTORS

Diver for the last four years.

An avid writer, Scott's work has been published in such diverse publications as *NFL Insider*, *Ms. Fitness*, *EGO Magazine* and *Zulusports.com*. Currently based in Colorado Springs, CO, Scott continues to seek out interesting and unique subjects for personality profiles and feature stories. He currently writes the monthly Milestones column, in addition to special assignments for *Skin Diver* and *Dive Report*. 🐟

One of the great gurus of underwater photography, students from around



the world travel to Grand Cayman to learn from **CATHY CHURCH**. After more than three decades of creating underwater images, her gallery is both a shrine for her admirers and a tribute to the natural beauty of her home. Recently inducted into the Women Diver's Hall of Fame, Cathy continues to widen the lens that U/W photographers try to master. 🐟

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WE DON'T OFTEN TURN OUR EYES ON ALL THE GREAT LOCAL DIVING THAT EXISTS throughout the U.S. to fill the pages of this magazine. And after putting this issue to bed, I can say with assurance that we've been shamefully neglectful. It's quite clear that divers don't just sit around, pining away their time until their next tropical vacation, and that the lakes, rivers, quarries, reservoirs and coastal diving of the U.S. are plenty full of dive adventure. After all, you don't find too many 727s to explore underwater in the Caribbean, but there's one in a lake in southern Illinois. Great viz and warm (96°F) water can be found in a geothermal pool dive in Midway, Utah, that attracts divers in droves, even from the neighboring states of Colorado and Idaho, especially during the snow-packed winter months. For pure adrenaline-pumping action, slip into the five to 15 knot current of the Colorado River or the Fire Hole River in Yellowstone and hang on for one hell of a ride. For viz that will blow your mind, head to Oregon and a lake aptly named Clear Lake. There you'll find an entire submerged forest reaching up through water that is best described as liquid air.

Local Motion



There's some famous diving offshore of the U.S., too. Molasses Reef in Florida, Hawaii and the Flower Gardens of Texas are chock-full of marine life and cradled by crystalline water. If shipwrecks are what drive you underwater, the Great Lakes are world-class, as are a few other surprising areas, such as Cour D'Alene Lake in Northern Idaho. And there's always the fantasy world of the California's kelp forests and Washington's realm of the Giant Octopus to keep your dive jones at bay.

There's more, much more. And none of these dives are hard to get to. None require a passport. Many are just around the corner from where you live. If you've never heard of some of these places, blame us. But next time you find yourself reflexively picking up your mask and snorkel, know that there is a place to satisfy your need no matter where you live. Yes, even North Dakota. Just call your local dive shop and get prepared to be pleasantly surprised. 🐟

TY SAWYER, EDITOR

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EDITORIAL

TY SAWYER
EDITOR

MICHELLE DANNER
MANAGING EDITOR

DARYL CARSON
FEATURES EDITOR

TIFFANY H. CAREY
ASSISTANT EDITOR

RYAN ALLEN
ASSISTANT EDITOR

JEAN-MICHEL COUSTEAU
ENVIRONMENTAL EDITOR

MARTY SNYDERMAN
FIELD EDITOR

ART

KIMBERLY RICHEY
ART DIRECTOR

BERNICE GUEVARRA
ASSOCIATE ART DIRECTOR

ADAM GREENE
ADVERTISING COORDINATOR

CONTRIBUTING EDITORS

ALFRED A. BOVE, M.D., PH.D.
ELLSWORTH BOYD • ANNA AND NED DELOACH
FRED GARTH • PAUL HUMANN
SCOTT D. JONES • PHIL NUYTTEN
KARL SHREEVES • DENISE NIELSEN TACKETT
LARRY TACKETT • NORBERT WU • WYLAND

SKIN DIVER ONLINE

DARYL CARSON
EDITOR

EDITORIAL AND SALES OFFICES

6420 WILSHIRE BOULEVARD
LOS ANGELES, CA 90048-5515
Fax: (323) 782-2121
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NATIONAL ADVERTISING DIRECTOR

KATHY KNOLL
ASSOCIATE PUBLISHER

ART

GAIL YOUNG
ADVERTISING ART DIRECTOR

MARKETING REPRESENTATIVES

LANCE FAHRNEY
(303) 670-9966 • fahrneyl@primediaccmmg.com

KATHY KNOLL
(323) 782-2538 • knollk@primediaccmmg.com

LORI LACHNICH
(954) 486-7890 • lachnicl@primediaccmmg.com

NEAL SANDERS
(813) 253-5393 • sandersn@primediaccmmg.com

KIM WALMER SUSSMAN
(310) 937-8161 • walmkerk@primediaccmmg.com

DAVID WILKINSON
(251) 968-3383 • wilkinsd@primediaccmmg.com

VIVIAN WILLIAMS
(323) 782-2778 • williamv@primediaccmmg.com

LEE ANN ZEHNDER
(408) 353-6766 • zehnderl@primediaccmmg.com

DIRECT MARKETING SALES

HEIDI DOUGLAS
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SALOMEH SEMSAR
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SKIN DIVER ONLINE

MICHELLE DANNER
ASSOCIATE PUBLISHER

PRIMEDIA, INC

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LETTERS

Ask, and You Shall Receive

Has your magazine ever considered that since not everyone can afford to go to all these far off places, why not give some time to diving here in the U.S.A.? We have some of the best diving right here in North Carolina's Morehead City area. I know some of your readers would like less expensive options.

—Capt. Bobby Cox,
Morehead City, N.C.

Editor's note: Check out page 60!



Readers Speak Out

Sacrificial Whales?

A Price on Dying

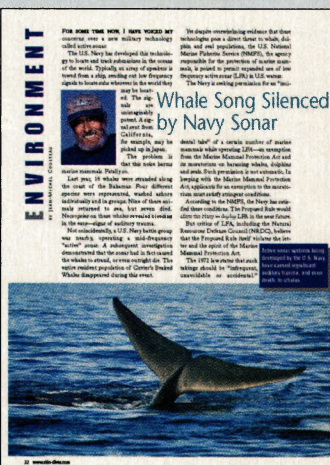
The article ["Whale Song Silenced by Navy Sonar," Dec. 2001] by Jean-Michel [Cousteau] was very disturbing. I thought the U.S. Navy had put a hold on further testing until more studies on the effects of this type of active sonar be completed. Nevertheless, how are we different from countries like Norway and Japan who actively hunt whales despite a "moratorium"? We may as well kill them, too, for food or other whale artifacts instead of letting them die for nothing.

—Paul W. H. Tung, M.D., via e-mail

The Shortcomings of Silence

Mr. Cousteau waxes eloquently on the loss of some whales as he places blame on the Navy for sonar use. Mr. Cousteau fails to realize that this country is at war and that this is the same thinking that stopped CIA penetration of terrorist organizations. He attacks the very necessary activities that allow him to be free and speak his opinion.

—Ernest M. Kraus, via e-mail



Aqua Cat at anchor in the Exuma Cays
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FREE FLOW

EDITED BY TIFFANY H. CAREY

IT WAS DIFFICULT TO IMAGINE a land exploration of Costa Rica that could compare with the excitement generated by visiting Cocos Island. But, with a couple extra days to explore, we thought we'd check out life in this famous eco-wonderland.

"*Pura vida*" (pure life), a popular saying in Costa Rica about its natural treasures, was not the phrase that sprang to mind as our jeep rumbled along the bumpy dirt roads, skirting potholes that could swallow us whole. Our destination was a tiny place on the tip of the Nicoya Peninsula called Malpais. After easing into things with beach and nature walks in the nearby Cabo Blanco Preserve and gorgeous sunsets viewed at Sunset Reef Hotel, it was time to head for the mountains.

The small roads leading to Monteverde were equally demand-



ing. Our base camp was the Eco-lodge San Luis on the perimeter of the cloud forest. Student volunteers from the U.S. and Canada were our guides. Monteverde is one of the natural wonders of the world. Its tree canopy is shrouded in a perpetual mist that keeps the forest an emerald green, and harbors an incredibly diverse animal and bird population.

Our plan was to traverse the canopy over bridges and cable. Sky Trek is a system of cable lines attached from one platform to another that allows you to glide through the forest on a pulley and harness. The speed and height of each segment increases with each location, the highest being 416 feet

Pura Vida

topside diversions in costa rica

over a canyon. The first step off the platform is a bit intimidating, but by the third, we wanted longer and faster locations. Gliding through and over the trees and punching through clouds gave us the same birds-eye view as the resident toucans.

The path leading from the verdant cloud forest would take us home the next day. Listening to the cicadas, the smell of moist hardwood trees, the soft ethereal mist that enveloped us brought only one thought to mind—*Pura vida*. 🐟

Special thanks to Alta Travel Planners at www.altatravelplanners.com.



Zooming through a rain forest canopy. Above: A sea of Blue-striped Snappers and a token Bigeye Squirrelfish.

PHOTOS: (PURA VIDA) STUART WESTMORLAND; (STEE) BARB ROY; OPPOSITE PAGE: (C&C) JOSEPH VAUGHN

Nanaimo's New Reef of Steel

A LOW THUNDERING RUMBLE RESONATED ACROSS THE WATER just after noon on Saturday, October 20, 2001, as pre-placed charges exploded, starting the sinking process. Thick black smoke and fire followed in an intense show of pyrotechnics. Soon the ship began to groan, shuttering throughout its massive hull as water rushed to overtake it. In just over three minutes the 400-foot HMCS *Cape Breton* was on the ocean floor near Nanaimo, British Columbia.

Navy Clearance Divers began to don their gear as Marine Contractor Wes Roots moved his boat closer. 'This was Roots' forth ship as preparation supervisor for the Artificial Reef Society of British Columbia (ARSBC), and he knew the routine well. No one was allowed to dive the new site until the Clearance Divers made sure all of the charges had properly detonated. Six entered the water with double tanks in teams of

two. Carefully, they searched the wreck, finding several live explosives from the



The moaning *Cape Breton* begins to take on massive amounts of water. Left: Prepping the ship for sinking.

pyrotechnics. Diving would have to be delayed until they could safely return later that day and remove them.

Originally acquired by the ARSBC over two years ago for the purpose of creating an artificial reef, the *Cape Breton*, a



CATCH & COOK

Survivor superchef Keith Famie dives for dinner in the San Juan Islands, Northwest Washington

JACQUES COUSTEAU CONSIDERED THESE SPARKLING STRAIGHTS, bays and sounds among the greatest recreational diving areas in the world. I've confirmed that the underwater bounty of this area is one of the most varied—and delicious.

You're pretty much in drysuit country here. Well worth it, as I hope you'll find the following recipe will be, which I prepared fresh within an hour



SAN JUAN-STYLE SEAFOOD PAELLA

- | | |
|----------------------------------|--------------------------|
| 1 ½ cups Brown rice | 1 White onion, diced |
| ½ cup Olive oil | 1 tbsp. Garlic, chopped |
| 10 oz. Salmon, diced | 1 tsp. Saffron |
| 8 oz. Halibut, diced | 2 cups Water |
| 12 Red Rock crab legs, meat only | 1 tsp. Thyme, dried |
| 12 Shrimp, 16/20 size, peeled | To taste Salt and pepper |
| 12 oz. Canned tomatoes, diced | |

PROCEDURE:

1. In a stainless steel three-quart paella pan with olive oil, heat the onions and garlic.
2. Next add your salmon, halibut and shrimp, and sauté for two to three minutes.
3. Next add your water in stages to cook the rice like risotto.
4. Continually stir the rice and add more water when the rice soaks it up.
5. When the rice is 60% cooked, add the remainder of the water and season the paella.
6. Finish the paella in a 350° oven until the rice is fully cooked. Serves six.

Dotting cerulean waters opposite Vancouver Island, the San Juan Islands are blessed with pristine scenery, envious isolation and best of all, a remarkably un-Northwest-like climate. A year-round water temperature between 48 and 52°F and a no-nonsense tide proves the meal ticket for a cornucopia of life, which has, in return, provided indigenous tribes and pro fisherman a livelihood for generations.

So important are the San Juan tides, that when the tide slips out, approximately 300 additional rocky points poke through the surface, bringing the total array of San Juan Islands to nearly 500. When it slips in, tons of nutrients follow, feeding such coldwater delicacies as scallops, crabs and Washington's primo half-shell treat, oysters.

I struck succulent pay dirt while diving at 60 feet off the coast of Orcas, the "horseshoe" island capping the San Juans. It was during slack tide and visibility was limited, but I managed to score a half-dozen Red Rock Crabs and a netful of "singing" scallops. Numerous kelp beds made for some difficult maneuvering, but the surreal landscape provided awesome visuals.

of docking. 🐟 —Keith Famie

For more on Keith Famie, visit www.keithfamie.com.

Scuba Cat's Diving Bathtub Race

IT HAD BEEN ONE YEAR SINCE MIKE STARK, OWNER of Scuba Cat Diving, had sunk a small smuggling boat to create a new dive site off Racha Yai Island, just south of Phuket. The dive site, Marla's Mystery, quickly became home to lionfish, large groupers, batfish, cleaner shrimp and a moray eel. To celebrate the first anniversary, an underwater bathtub race was held. Holes were drilled in the sides of 10 tubs so that small fish, but not their larger predators, could get inside them.

The tubs were launched into the water where divers scrambled to get into them. Seconds later, the tubs and riders had become completely submerged and disappeared from sight. At 105 feet, the tubs were flipped over and placed around Marla's Mystery. And thus, 10 new condos for Thailand's fishy friends were created! 🐟



retired Canadian Navy "Victory" class ship was moored in North Vancouver, where preparation first began.

After several months of using volunteer cleaning parties, organized by the Nanaimo Dive Association (NDA) and the ARSBC, the ship was towed to Nanaimo in August. Once in Nanaimo, additional divers, fellow business owners and members of the NDA worked almost around the clock to remove any dangerous substances and structures from the ship.



Navy Clearance Divers wait to clear the wreck of ordnance.

Sinking day attracted hundreds of small boaters, a BC Ferry full of spectators and two military ships to bid the *Cape Breton* a farewell and welcome it into Canadian history.

"Everyone has put in countless hours on this project," comments Ian Hall, president

of the NDA. "We will be glad to see it finally on the bottom."

Besides the extra income generated by the largest artificial reef to date in the world, ongoing scientific research projects will help to answer important follow-up questions. One such project currently on the *Cape Breton* is designed to gain vital clues to the growth of marine inhabitants on coldwater artificial reefs through the involvement of visiting and local divers. Numerous pre-marked spaces have been selected and numbered on various parts of the ship in order to study which marine creatures move in. The data will provide a better idea of the type of future scientific studies as well as future statistics on growth estimation.

Hundreds have already dived the new reef and hundreds more are expected throughout the year. 🐟 —Barb Roy
For further information, contact the NDA at www.divebritishcolumbia.com or for information on the ARSBC's other reef projects, visit www.artificialreef.bc.ca.

BY JEAN-MICHEL COUSTEAU

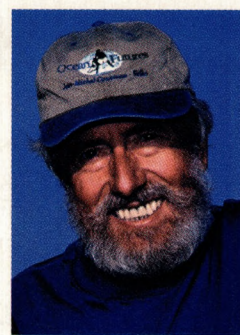
WE ALL KNOW A "FISH STORY" WHEN we hear one—the fisherman's yarn about the big one that got away. Countries and international organizations apparently tell fish stories, too, on a scale to match their size. But where we find it endearing when an old fisherman tries to win our admiration, we cannot so easily smile at the machinations of fisheries managers whose exaggerations pose a serious threat to marine biodiversity.

Canadian scientists, writing in the journal *Nature*, found that China and the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) have been misreporting fishery statistics, leading us to believe that

Fish Stories

as temperature and depth. Comparing China's catch data with what was known from other regions, the scientists concluded that China's reports were too high for what the ecosystem could support.

In another fishing region, the same problem has emerged.



Albatrosses are a frequent victim of the Patagonian Toothfish industry.

there are far more fish in the sea than are actually present.

According to the authors, Reg Watson and Daniel Pauly of the University of British Columbia, global catches did not increase during the 1990s by 700 million pounds annually, as reported, but may have *fallen* by nearly 800 million pounds each year.

This revelation came from a new computer model that used FAO statistics to construct maps of the global fish catch, based on the major fishing regions and their ecological profiles, figuring in factors such

For years, environmentalists have been trying to alert the world to the problem of illegal fishing. Pirate fishing of Patagonian Toothfish (called "sea bass" in American restaurants, where it is primarily served) has put many populations on the verge of commercial extinction.

Several years ago, the 27 parties to the Convention on the Conservation of Antarctic Marine Living Resources (CCAMLR) instituted a Catch Documentation Scheme to corral illegal fishing by making all legal fishermen report their catch.

But now the organization TRAFFIC, which

monitors the trade in endangered species, reports that illegal fishing is not the only problem—CCAMLR members may not be fully reporting the extent of their catches to the organization. It is known that 10 members supply the U.S. market, but only New Zealand officially reports its activities. According to TRAFFIC, the actual catch of Patagonian Toothfish may be twice as high as reported.

One would expect outrage and action. Is that happening? In some cases, it is.

For example, the European Commission has been very disturbed about overfishing, and has acted swiftly to limit catches. Recent reductions are stunning. The Commission has proposed reducing catches of cod between Denmark and Sweden by 60 percent, haddock in the Irish Sea by 52 percent, sole in the North Sea by 25 percent, and others.

Unfortunately, the Antarctic parties do not feel the same urgency. In November of last year, they met in Hobart, Tasmania, to discuss strengthening conservation. Environmental groups had called for satellite monitoring systems, so

that ships can be tracked, a ban on marketing illegally caught fish, and real punishments for rogue vessels.

Yet despite admitting egregious shortcomings in the present monitoring and compliance regime, the meeting ended not with a reduction of fishing effort, but the adoption of a nine percent *increase* in the allowable catch of toothfish!

Now CCAMLR members are pondering how best to structure the com-

mercial exploitation of krill, the small crustaceans that form the diet of many keystone species, such as seals, penguins and whales.

The parties are also in no hurry to reduce the incidental killing of albatrosses, petrels and other seabirds by both legal and illegal toothfish fleets.

These birds are chiefly caught in the baited hooks that float behind the long-line boats and are drowned. According to CCAMLR data, up to 90,000 seabirds are killed annually by toothfishers. Over the past five years, the fishery may have killed as many as 89,000 albatrosses, 15,000 giant petrels, and 275,000 white-chinned petrels.

The new Agreement on the Conservation of Albatrosses and Petrels pledges signatories to undertake bold actions to reduce seabird

...up to 90,000
seabirds are
killed annually
by toothfishers.

bycatch. But only Australia has ratified the agreement.

All of this comes against a background of dwindling global fish availability, through overfishing, bycatch and habitat loss. According to the Canadian report, the global seafood supply peaked in 1988 at 34 pounds per person per year. That number has been cut to 25 pounds, and is expected to reach 17 pounds by the year 2020.

Unless the fishery managers begin to take their own mandate seriously, the resources of the global oceans will be despoiled beyond repair. One major part of the effort is honesty. As Watson and Pauly have written, false reporting breeds complacency. And that is something the Earth cannot afford. 🐟



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Shutter Lag: A Digital Dilemma

BY MARTY SNYDERMAN

A friend recently suggested that I swap my film camera for a digital camera. Another told me that if I do, I won't be as happy because of "shutter lag." What do you think?

—Tom T., Charlotte, NC

I REMAIN A FIRM BELIEVER THAT IT IS THE photographer that creates the image, not the technology. A lot of people seem to believe their ability to create the best images requires that they have the latest, greatest technology at their disposal. I strongly disagree. Ansel Adams and Hans Haas would still blow us all away. Knowing your subject and the message you want to convey are far more important than whether your camera says made by Sea & Sea, Nikon, Sony or Olympus, etc.

That said, there is no question that the digital realm offers a number of advantages to underwater photographers. These include: 1) instant feedback as you can almost immediately look at your results via the playback mode; 2) the comparatively small size of many digital systems, a feature that makes these systems relatively easy to travel and dive with; 3) not having to concern yourself with the possibility of having film

damaged by X-ray machines when passing through airport security checks; and 4) the cost of film and processing is eliminated, but you will need a computer system and the necessary software to manage your digital images. These advantages make digital photography well worth considering.



Capturing images of subjects in motion with a digital camera can be somewhat of a challenge because of shutter lag.



However, digital photography is not trouble free. The problem known as "shutter lag" is one of the shortcomings even with the state-of-the-art "prosumer" digital cameras. Shutter lag is the term used to describe the delay between the time you press the shutter release button and the instant the camera actually records what the lens is seeing. Before the shutter of a digital camera is tripped, the viewfinding system works like a video camera, and you can watch the image that the lens sees in real time as you look at the viewing monitor on the camera. But things often change from the time you depress the shutter release. The camera has to take itself out of the video mode and get into the "capture-the-image NOW mode" and this takes time. If your subject is stationary, as is the case with sea fans, sponges, artifacts on wrecks and the like, the time delay caused by shutter lag is not a major concern. As long as you continue to hold your desired composition, everything comes up roses. If, however, your subject moves, the delay can seem like an eternity. Fish faces and sea lion mugs in the viewfinder turn into fish fins and sea lion behinds in your final images.

With moving subjects you have to try to anticipate the action and keep panning with the camera while you hope you will have the frame you want when the camera records the image. With top-of-the-line, professional quality digital cameras, such as the Nikon D1X, Canon EOS-D30 and Fuji Finepix S1, there is no shutter lag. But, these cameras are very expensive by comparison to the prosumer models. My bottom line advice to Tom is if the listed advantages of prosumer digital cameras make sense to you, consider going the digital route. On the other hand, if you want to be able to capture an exact instant in time, you will want to consider putting a rather expensive top-of-the-line, professional digital camera into a relatively expensive housing or staying in the world of film cameras. 🐟



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Reaching Beyond the Now

BY PHIL NUYTTEN

I WAS THINKING ABOUT THE OLD saying "You can't take it with you," and musing over the fact that deep-ocean explorers must do exactly that, take it with them. It also occurred to me that a short pontification on that subject might be a good idea.

So, why is it so incredibly difficult to do more than paddle about in the tide pools of our great oceans? Simple. We just weren't designed to go any farther!



The day that you can strip down to your skivvies, gallop down a runway, launch yourself into the sky, and frog-kick your way up to 35,000 feet—à la Peter Pan—is the same day that you can put on your

The day that you can strip down to your skivvies, gallop down a runway, launch yourself into the sky, and frog-kick your way up to 35,000 feet—à la Peter Pan—is the same day that you can put on your wetsuit and swim down to the very bottom of this planet.

wetsuit and swim down to the very bottom of this planet.

My admittedly biased view of the way that man will live and work in the deep ocean derives from having been involved in deep-diving all of my adult life. As a member of the team that made

the first commercial 600-foot dives in the 1960s, as part of the first North American 1,000-foot dives in the '70s, and as the Senior Vice President of

This theoretical tri-bubble Bongo submersible was used in *Star Wars: Phantom Menace*. Designed to carry a three-man crew in the forward occupancy bubble and freight or additional passengers in the side bubbles, the pressure hull framework is "grown," rather than fabricated. It's a prime example of how people may find the means to live and travel underwater.

Oceaneering International a few years later (when the ambient-pressure diving door began to swing shut after a 2,000-foot saturation test dive at the University of Pennsylvania), I became convinced

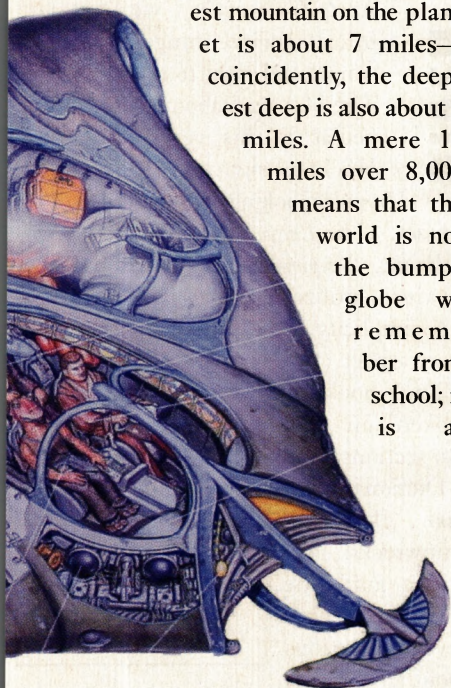
that ambient-pressure deep-diving would prove to be only a brief detour on the road to the deep ocean. Remember, in the '60s we planned for "cities under the sea," and Aquanauts did spend weeks, even months, living in sub-sea habitats. People in the subsea

industry, and divers in general, all believed that colonization of the sea floor was just around the corner. Certainly, there was a solid awareness of the hazards of pressure, such as the bends, embolism and the like, but we were completely unprepared for the silent, insidious, long-term effects of direct high-pressure exposure. Vestibular bends in the inner ear caused some spectacular gyrations, but problems like bone necrosis and neural system changes proved far more dangerous to the deep divers in the long run.

We were lulled by the most modern of myths, that man is tough, resilient and like cockroaches, can survive anywhere. What nonsense! We are actually the most fragile of creatures—big

jellyfish full of chopsticks, arranged in a physical design that is millions of years old. Our cranial software has evolved at a respectable rate, but the vehicle we truck that brain around in has barely changed and is very specific in design.

Consider this: The highest mountain on the planet is about 7 miles—coincidentally, the deepest deep is also about 7 miles. A mere 14 miles over 8,000 means that the world is not the bumpy globe we remember from school; it is as



smooth as the shiny chrome ball on a trailer hitch. When we see the continents from the shuttle or the space station, they are tattoos on the skin of "Planet Ocean." So what? Well, even in that narrow 14-mile band, we "tough," "resilient" humans can't survive anywhere close to the extremes as we were designed. But we do go there—as we routinely fly from continent to continent and, less routinely, walk on the face of the moon!

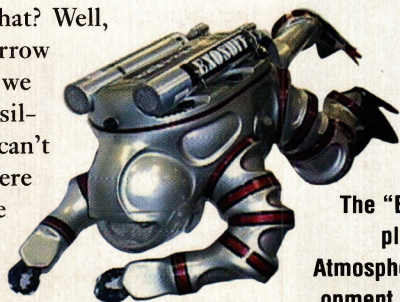
We do it using the armor of technology to venture well outside of our primitive design specifications. In order to function, we build machines, devices, contraptions that surround us with a layer of that warm, sea-level, swamp where our

current design was finalized.

I said I was biased and I am: I've spent the last 30 years trying to find or develop effective ways to get man on the bottom without the physiological hazards associated with exposure to pressure—not just to visit there, but ultimately to live there, work there, and foster new generations of sea-people.

Physical armor that will protect us from the pressure of the deep ocean, while still allowing free movement, has been an undersea grail for well over 200 years. But submarines that contain our normal breathing gas and surface pressure have been a practical reality for something under half of that time. Atmospheric diving suits—"personal pressure armor"—have only become commercially viable in the latter part of the last century. Enormous improvements in small submersibles, atmospheric suits and even deep habitats, operating at surface pressure and perhaps fueled by heat vents, will come in this century.

Enormous improvements in small submersibles, atmospheric suits and even deep habitats, operating at surface pressure and perhaps fueled by heat vents, will come in this century.



There is no doubt in my mind that we will live and work at the bottom of Planet Ocean—one

The "Exosuit" is the ergonomic test platform of a new generation of Atmospheric Diving Suits under development by Nuytco Research, Ltd. It is fully autonomous, with no physical link to the surface. The wearer remains at one atmosphere, so there is no decompression required, even if time underwater is 12 hours at 660 feet.

day—just as we will go to the stars. But, in each of these extremes we must protect and care for our primitive steeds, even as our minds reach, always, beyond now. 🐙

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DIVER'S SLIBRARY

BY MICHELLE DANNER

Welcome to the Diver's Library, where each month we bring you the latest in diving media.

A TO Z—THAT'S A NICE WAY to categorize things. Easy, simple and right to the point. The best part about encyclopedias is this very format. You know right where to go if you're looking for an "African artifact." The *Encyclopedia of Western Atlantic Shipwrecks and Sunken Treasures* utilizes this simplicity in every aspect.

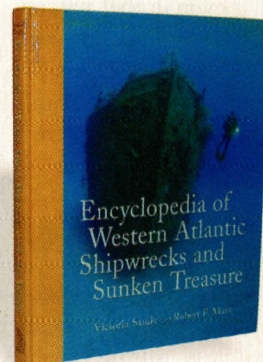
The book is broken up into two sections: Part I: Dictionary and Part II: The Shipwrecks. Part I is a goldmine for divers that have questions about anything to

do with wreck diving, from aerial survey to zoology. Part II is also easy to use. Starting with the Bahamas and ending with the Virgin Islands, every region is also categorized in alphabetical order. Each wreck is listed by name and gives useful information on the shipwreck: type, captain, location and history.

Oozing with facts, this book is missing one thing: color. But if a person cares more about the content and does not need pretty pictures, then the *Encyclopedia of Western Atlantic Shipwrecks and Sunken Treasure* is a perfect addition to any diver's library. 🐟

Encyclopedia of Western Atlantic Shipwrecks and Sunken Treasure

by Victoria Sandz with
Robert F. Marx
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Skin Diver Events: Learn to Shoot Like a Pro and Have Fun Too

I AM CONSTANTLY IN AWE OF the fantastic underwater photography that we have in each issue of *Skin Diver* magazine. As a new diver, I'm still trying to get my buoyancy under control—I can't imagine how the pros dive and take pictures too.

Fortunately, *Skin Diver* events offer me—and our readers—the opportunity to meet, dive with and learn from professional photographers. Most week-long events include a fun-filled agenda with slide shows, incredible diving, meet-and-greet parties, and award ceremonies for best photography.

One of the best aspects of the events is the diving. It's the chance to get your fins wet in some of the most amazing locations: Malaysia, Roatan, Hawaii, Mexico and more.

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At the Kona Classic Underwater Photography and Art Festival, April 27 to May 5, 2002, divers can dive side-by-side with some of the best underwater photographers in the world: Norbert Wu, Bob Talbot, Doug Perrine, Marty Snyderman, David Fleetham and James Watt. You'll also get a chance to meet Wyland, who is hosting a kids contest and sculpting the numerous awards that

will be handed out during the week's events. Other activities include a 5K biathlon, snorkeling for kids, evening film festivals and much more. Aloha!



PHOTO: DAVID FLEETHAM

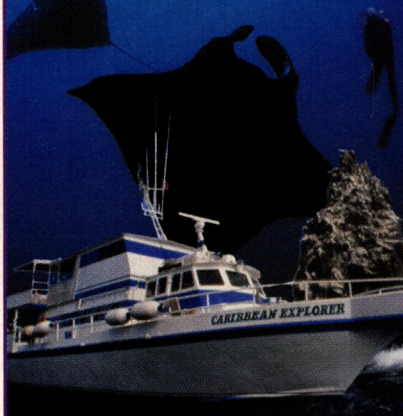
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BY RYAN ALLEN AND TY SAWYER



Ranger Jr.

Despite the popular '70s T-shirt message, "Kid's Are People, Too," most scuba gear designed for younger divers doesn't have the same features that adult gear includes. Fortunately, Zeagle Systems' new Ranger Jr. addresses this formative issue. This full-featured BC is designed to fit and perform for the younger (or smaller) diving enthusiast, and comes equipped with D-rings, adjustable cummerbund and shoulder straps, weight pockets and inflator hose.

It also includes Zeagle's patented Ripcord weight-release system and has a 24-pound lift capacity bladder. Perhaps best of all, the Ranger Jr.'s adjustable elements (cummerbund and shoulder straps) can expand as a young diver grows, and will accept both standard size tanks and smaller tanks. This means that young divers won't outgrow their BC as quickly as they do their bathing suits, shoes, pants, shirts....

Zeagle: (813) 782-5568, www.zeagle.com

COMP Tank Clock

For those ready to move beyond dive-related bumper stickers, it might be time to tune into Divers Direct's new COMP Tank Clock/Radio. The unit is 8 inches tall, and is a fun, useful addition to any diver's desk or nightstand. It performs the duties of both an AM/FM radio and analog alarm clock. The glow-in-the-dark face is mounted into the front, and access to the clock and alarm settings are in the back. Dials for adjusting volume and tuning radio stations are on the sides, but unfortunately there are no station markings, so you have to feel around the airwaves until you find your favorite. An antenna helps provide good, clear reception. The clock/radio uses one 9v and one AA battery, and is available in yellow or blue.

Divers Direct: (800) DIVE-USA, www.diversdirect.com



Capt. Dan Berg's Florida and Florida Keys Chart of Shipwrecks

You know that movie where the girl and guy are trapped on some deserted island. You know that movie. This guy and girl fall in love after diving and swimming over reefs that explode with color. The lagoon water is warm, crystal clear and full of romantic tropical splendor. The whole movie could play out to happy elevator music. You know that movie. Well, the guys who buy these shipwreck charts have never seen it.

Instead they meditate on the parchment-style paper with the renderings of the shipwrecks that await, tantalizingly, for the next underwater explorer.

Dan Berg's shipwreck charts evoke a sense of the past and make a great addition to a diver's art gallery.

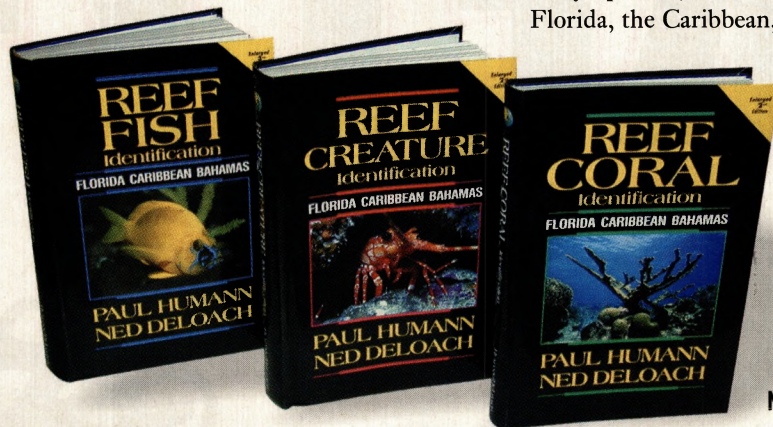
Aqua Explorers, Inc.: (516) 868-2658, www.aquaexplorers.com



New World Publications Marine Life ID Books

Paul Humann and Ned DeLoach set the standard for marine life ID books back in 1989 with the first editions of their popular reference books—*Reef Creature Identification*, *Reef Coral Identification* and *Reef Fish Identification*. Now all three have been beefed up with more data, photos, a cloth-stitched flexible binding that folds flat for ease of use and water-repellent plastic covers.

Reef Fish ID (3rd Ed.) has grown 20 percent and includes an addition of 100 new fish species. The text has been scientifically updated, and the book now boasts 825 photographs of fish from Florida, the Caribbean, the Bahamas and, new to this edition, Brazil.



Reef Creatures ID (2nd Ed.) is 30 percent larger and includes 220 new photos of the strange sponges, crabs, mollusks, jellies, nudibranchs, etc., that inhabit the reef, including photos of an extraordinary octopus. The 660 pics provide a comprehensive reference of the Caribbean area's unique world.

Reef Coral ID (2nd Ed.) helps divers identify the animals with 530 photographs of stony coral, gorgonians, fire coral, black coral and marine plants that inhabit the tropical western Atlantic.

New World Publications: (904) 737 6558, www.fishid.com

Oceanic Flex BC

Oceanic's new Flex BC incorporates the design features of a more costly BC without the sticker shock. The Flex comes with Oceanic's QuickLock integrated weight system that includes two dumpable weight pockets, as well as two non-dumpable pockets behind the shoulders for fine tuning buoyancy. An expandable BioFlex material helps reduce chest squeeze. The interior is padded and lined with velour for comfort. Besides the shoulder air dump, there is also an innovative bottom dump with the pull tab in the *front*! Lift capacity ranges from 13 pounds (XS) to 35 pounds (XL).

Oceanic Worldwide: (510) 562-0500, www.oceanicworldwide.com



Cressi Minima

HOLY SILVERSIDES! I'm Cressi's Minima. Otherwise known as a sleek, ultra low-volume mask that combines the best features of standard masks with those of goggles. Batman would wear me because my extremely soft, wide skirt fits to a variety of faces, and offers a comfortable, watertight fit. The side straps are easy to adjust while on the face, but *DRAT!* the narrow tabs might prove difficult to handle if wearing thick gloves. That said, the portion of the strap that hugs the back of the head is nicely designed to fit to a larger area and adhere to the contours of the skull—this works well at reducing shift and maintaining fit during the dive.

My minimal features provide maximum benefits. *KA-POW!* The low internal volume and tempered lenses provide a good field of view. My small overall size and very light weight also makes me an ideal mask for freediving. *To the water, Robin!*

Cressi: (800) 338-9143 www.cressisubusa.com



LICKETY.



Text by Daryl Carson
Photography by Bonnie J. Cardone

SPLIT!

Diving's Fastest Fins

Although Force Fins had had split fin designs on the market for years, it wasn't until Apollo successfully launched the Bio Fin a couple of years ago that manufacturers jumped on the split fin bandwagon with enough force to shatter its imaginary axles.

Today there are a dozen such fins, and several manufacturers offer more than one blade design. However, understanding the magic of these dual-lobed wonders requires a brief discussion of their predecessor, the paddle fin.

One of the problems with a traditional paddle fin is turbulence. When that big flat blade gets pushed up and down, a great deal of water spills over the sides of the fin and creates little eddies (or wasted energy), while only a part of the water moved by the fin is directed behind the kick to create forward thrust. A split fin, however, directs more water to the rear of the blade (creating more forward thrust), since the split allows each side of the blade to move independently and reduce the angle of attack.

The other advantage of split fins, and the part of the technology hyped the most, relies on the same principle that explains the lift created by airplane wings. When air flows over an airplane wing, it travels a farther distance on the top than on the bottom. This means the air on top of the wing travels faster, creating an area of low pressure. This in turn creates suction above the wing, otherwise known as lift. Split fins work in the same way, since each side of the fin acts as a kind of propeller blade. As the water moves across the blade, it travels a farther distance on one side than the other. This causes an area of low pressure in front of the blade, which creates suction to help pull the diver forward. The net result, dear student of physics, is more thrust with less bust, more leave with less heave, more get up and go without the heart-pounding blow.

But, hold on to your beanie because there's more. To squeeze every bit of performance out of a pair of split fins requires using the proper kicking form. Many divers, especially those who often fight currents or dive with extra equipment, have come to favor very stiff paddle fins that require long, powerful strokes. The result is definitely more thrust, but it comes at a steep price: muscle fatigue. A wide kick also increases a diver's profile, creating additional drag and making it that much harder to push through the water. With split fins, however, the most efficient stroke is a modified flutter kick. This keeps the fins in line with the diver's body to reduce the swimming profile and can increase their kick frequency. It means more speed with less fatigue, more gain with less pain, more distance with the least amount of resistance. (I have got to stop doing that.)

But choosing among the many split fins available is a matter of details. The chief differences are in the materials used and the contours of each blade. Many have angled foot pockets, some more severe than others, and one has vents to increase water flow. As for material, each manufacturer has developed a blade to balance important traits such as snap, durability and kick resistance. And, don't forget to look at buckle releases, strap adjustments and the shape of the foot pockets. Getting such ancillary details right will make the difference in finding a pair of fins that is simply satisfactory and a pair that, well, really kicks.

Apollo Bio Fin

The first design on the market that became a commercial success, the Bio Fin is made from a natural rubber that offers great flex. It has a modestly angled foot pocket (you'll hardly notice a difference in feel from a traditional blade) and a generous toe box to accommodate divers that are large of foot or wearing bulky drysuit boots. Two nice details on the heel strap are rubber stops on each end to keep it from pulling through the buckle, and the center tab is open in the middle, perfect for sticking a finger through to ease donning. \$190-\$200

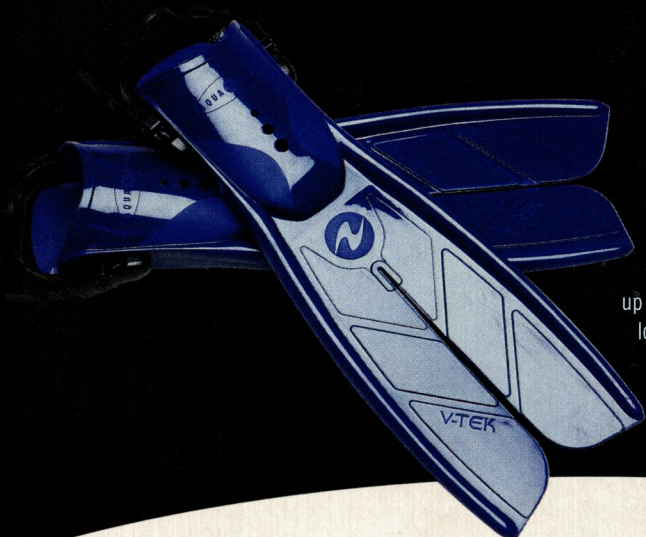
Apollo: (800) 231-0909, www.apollosportsusa.com



Aqua Lung V-Tek

When crafting the V-Tek, Aqua Lung decided to use polyurethane for its outstanding snap characteristics and high durability. After thousands of kick cycles, this blade is designed to have the same punch it did on day one. This material is also resistant to ultraviolet light and has "a microbe immune property" that helps the blade stand up to the bio hazards of long stays in wet dive bags and boat lockers. The blade shape is longer and narrower than that of the Apollo, and while the foot pocket is not significantly angled, it is similarly shaped and very comfortably accommodates a wide variety of booties and drysuit boots. Suggested Price: \$185

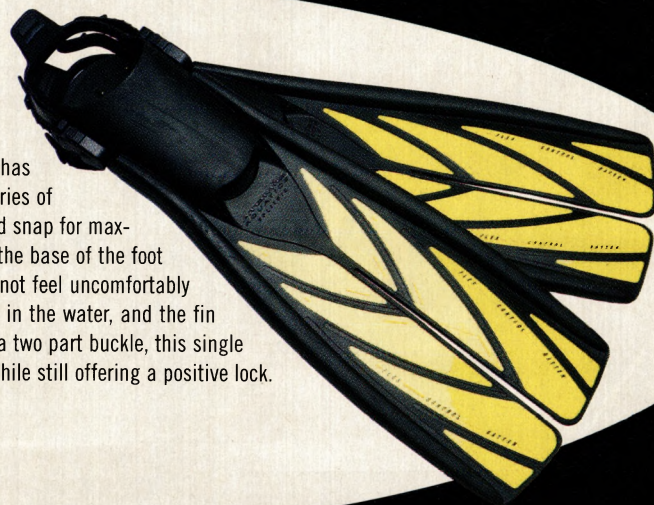
Aqua Lung: (800) 775-3483, www.aqualung.com



Atomic SplitFin

To more precisely control blade movement during use, Atomic has incorporated Flex Control Battens into their SplitFin design. This series of inserts adds stiffness to the blade, creating just the right shape and snap for maximum thrust. In addition, Atomic uses this same material to make the base of the foot pocket more rigid. The result is a fin that, while easy to kick, does not feel uncomfortably mushy. The foot pocket is slightly angled for a good blade position in the water, and the fin straps are connected with a new EZ-LOK buckle system. Instead of a two part buckle, this single piece design slides onto a post that allows 180 degrees of swing, while still offering a positive lock. Atomic Aquatics price: \$189

Atomic Aquatics: (714) 375-1435, www.atomicaquatics.com



Force Fin Foil Force

From the mind and hands of Bob Evans comes the Foil Force. Always a creative and independent designer, Bob introduced the Foil Force well before the rest of the world went split fin crazy. Its polyurethane construction allows for superior snap. Get this fin going and the long slender blades continue to work for you on the recovery stroke. The curved blades direct water in the only place it should go, behind the diver for thrust. The clean lines of the blade are designed to reduce turbulence, and the signature open toe foot pocket helps eliminate cramps, while allowing the diver to drive the fin with their most powerful muscles. Price: \$179.95

Force Fin: (800) FIN SWIM, www.forcefin.com



Genesis Blitz

If you're not pushing water, you're not going forward. The Genesis Blitz helps ensure you push as much as possible by using a thermoplastic elastomer called Duoprene. Perhaps the stiffest blade in the group (except for its twin, the Trek, from sister company Sherwood), the Blitz really grabs the water. Continuous ridges down the long axis of the blades help keep water flow in the most efficient direction, and the significantly angled foot pocket keeps the blade at the correct angle for maximum bite. Suggested Price: \$180
Genesis: (800) 347-9766, www.genessiscuba.com



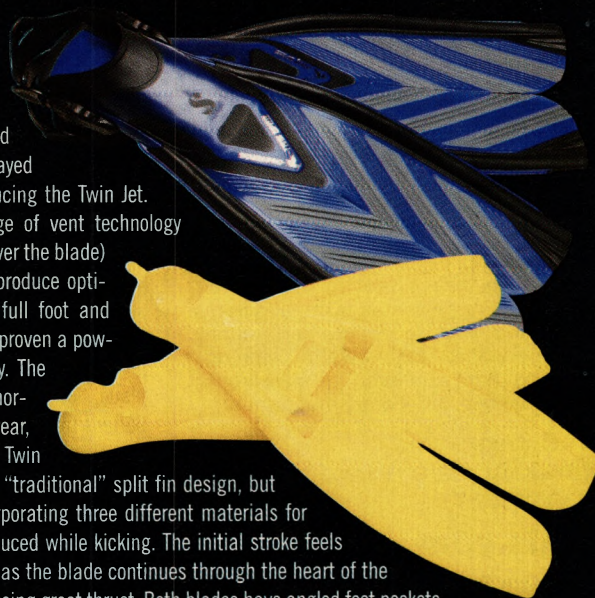
Oceanic Vortex V12 AND V6

Like the Blitz, Oceanic's Vortex V12 is also made from Duoprene. However, it is a completely different fin. Extremely malleable, its design allows great independent movement of the respective blades. Divers that appreciate a little flexibility will like the natural give of the foot pocket, which is also angled for better positioning in the water. Also in the Vortex family is the V6 snorkeling fin. One of the few split fin designs aimed at snorkelers, it has a comfortable rubber foot pocket and small, but firm, blade. Exterior ridges on the blade combine with the split design to keep snorkelers from simply scooping and splashing water into the air, and instead, propelling it behind them. Oceanic Suggested Prices: V12 \$189.95 and V6 \$119.95
Oceanic: (510) 562-0500, www.oceanicworldwide.com



Scubapro Twin Jet and Twin Speed

The Scubapro Jetfin was the industry standard in fins for so long that some old diehards still refuse to wear anything else. When Scubapro introduced their first split fin design, it paid homage to that legacy by producing the Twin Jet. This fin is a beautiful marriage of vent technology (which allows great water flow over the blade) and the split blade design (to produce optimal thrust). Available in both full foot and open heel models, it has quickly proven a powerhouse in the split fin category. The full foot Twin Jets are great for snorkeling as well as diving. Last year, Scubapro also introduced the Twin Speed fins. These are more of a "traditional" split fin design, but they, too, have a twist. By incorporating three different materials for the blade, a distinct feel is produced while kicking. The initial stroke feels more like a paddle fin, but then as the blade continues through the heart of the kick it softens up while still producing great thrust. Both blades have angled foot pockets, but the open heel Twin Jet (not pictured) is probably the best for bulky boots and drysuits. Suggested Prices: Twin Jet Open Heel \$189, Full Foot \$159, Twin Speed \$154
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Sherwood: (800) 347-9766, www.sherwoodscuba.com

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TUSA: (562) 498-3708, www.tusa.com

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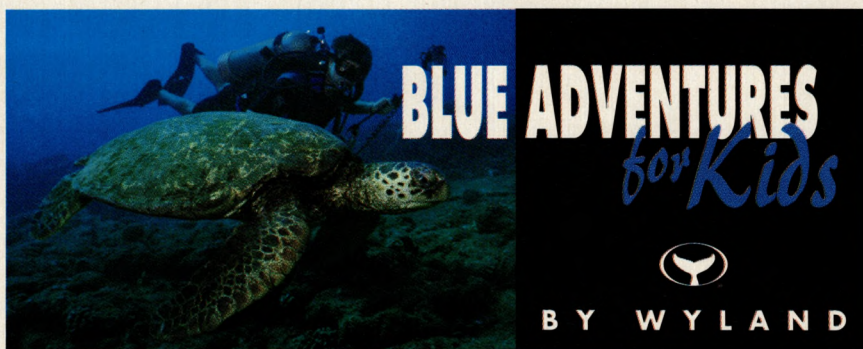
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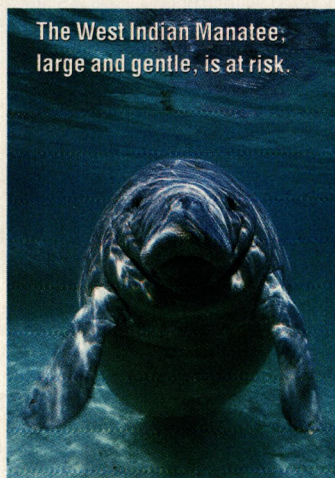
THE OTHER DAY I WAS READING ABOUT a fourth-grade class that was wrestling with a very difficult subject: Why do animals become extinct? Through its studies, the class learned that extinctions in recent years have been accelerating, and that great care should be taken to ensure that the creatures on today's endangered species list don't go the way of the passenger pigeon, dodo bird or Stellar's Sea Cow—all of which have vanished from the face of the earth through the carelessness of man.

One creature in the midst of fighting for its life is the West Indian Manatee, sometimes referred to as the Florida Manatee. Loss of habitat, disease, poaching, entanglement with fishing lines, and collisions with boaters have reduced the numbers of Florida Manatees to roughly 2,400. Scientists are doing everything in their power to save the manatees from extinction, but it is an uphill battle. And, if sadly, it turns out to be one that we

lose, we cannot let the loss of the manatees be in vain. To honor these wonderful creatures, we can study what went wrong and use our knowledge to prevent the untimely loss of other great marine mammals in the future.

A visit to Homosassa Springs Wildlife State Park in Homosassa Springs, FL, may very well be one of the best places in the world for you and your children to see, learn about and understand the situation of the Florida Manatee. Converted several years ago from a privately owned zoo, the property

on the Homosassa River is now managed by the Florida State Park System. The zoo is still there and provides an exceptional opportunity to see native animals against a 168-acre backdrop of wetlands, Sabal palms, live oaks, Southern magnolia and spring-run streams. But the biggest lure to the park is a huge floating underwater observatory that allows your entire family to experience the world of the manatee in incredible detail. Most of the manatees at the park have been either born in captivity or injured and are undergoing rehabilitation before being released back into the wild. For some, such as Electra, a large, heavily scarred Florida Manatee, a collision with a boat years ago resulted in a lung injury that has impaired her ability to float. Because her injury prevents her from becoming released, she has become a permanent resident of the park. "You can literally get within inches of a manatee here," says Tom Linley, park manager. "You can even see the fine details of the animal, like hair, which most people don't even know that manatees have."



The West Indian Manatee, large and gentle, is at risk.

Unlike other manatee facilities, Homosassa Springs is a completely natural environment. The manatees play and feed around a natural underground spring that pumps millions of gallons of fresh water into the river every hour. Through the floating observatory, you can see how these 3,000-pound herbivores interact with the world. Although it is legal to swim with manatees in the wild, the federal government and the state of Florida have established strict rules governing interaction with them. For exam-

ple, you cannot separate the mothers from the calves, and you may touch the animals only if they approach you. Viewing facilities such as the one at Homosassa Springs eliminate any stress on the manatees caused by human interaction, and they are especially good for very young children who don't have the swimming skills to enter the water with these large, but harmless creatures. "There are some nice man-made facilities for manatees around the country, but they're not environments where the manatees can hear the natural sounds of the river," Linley says. "In many ways, the manatees here in Homosassa don't seem like they are in captivity."

Maybe the most important lesson children can learn at the park is how hu-

Homosassa Springs Wildlife State Park

4150 U.S. Highway 19,
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The park is 75 miles north of Tampa
and St. Petersburg, and 90 miles
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mans have impacted the manatees' world. As the manatees glide through the clear waters of the spring, you can see the long, white scars these creatures bear from collisions with watercraft. Manatees depend on fresh water and frequent slow-moving rivers and streams. Unfortunately, these areas are becoming more and more popular with boaters and fisherman, who have a hard time seeing the manatees and, despite their best efforts, occasionally collide with them.

As a parent, you can use the opportunity at Homosassa Springs to ask your child what they would do to save the manatees. The act of listening, pointing them in the right direction for solutions, and encouraging them to stay curious will help them gain confidence in their thinking and develop their interests in science and the environment. The manatees may very well become the icon for protecting animals from extinction in the future. At the very least, I think the lessons they have to teach us deserve to be shared. 🐟

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FREEFLOW



Spring Diving in Fort Lauderdale

GREATER FORT LAUDERDALE HAS unveiled new "Scuba Diving" pages on www.sunny.org. The enhanced scuba section contains information on some of the popular dive sites, plus listings and links to dive operators and dive shops. In addition to a great variety of wrecks and reefs scattered along 23 miles of beaches, Greater Fort Lauderdale offers some exciting events.

• **Ocean Fest:** Highlights of this annual event, May 17 to 19, 2002, in Lauderdale-By-The-Sea, include scuba dive related exhibits, live music, seminars and shore diving. *For more information, call (954) 776-1000.*

• **Air & Sea Show:** One of the largest spectator events in the world (an estimated four million people viewed last year's show), the annual Air & Sea Show on Fort Lauderdale Beach will take place May 4 to 5, 2002. The show highlights the might of the American military with an impressive display of boats and planes. *For more information, call (954) 527-5600.*

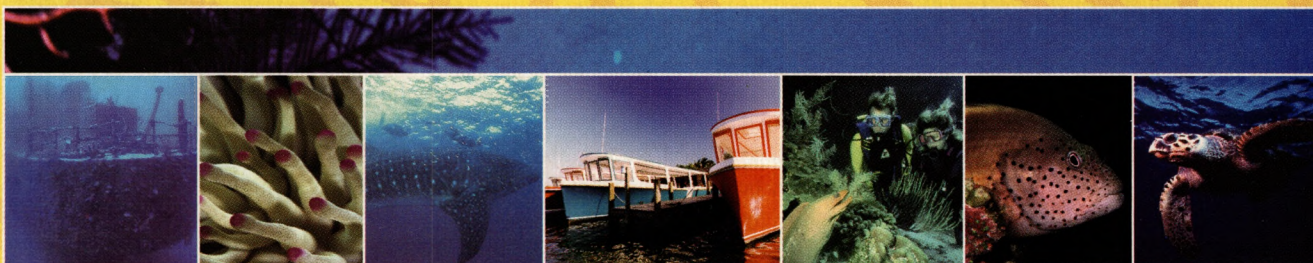
Diver FYI

RECENTLY, TURNEFFE FLATS TOOK delivery of a new PRO 48 built by Custom Dive Boats. This will become the primary dive boat, although the company does not have plans to increase the number of divers beyond 16 per week.

The Main Lodge at Turneffe Flats has been completely remodeled. Luckily, Turneffe Flats escaped the devastating hurricanes of last fall without damage.

For more information, visit www.tflats.com or call (800) 815-1304.

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This Diving Doctor Is Definitely In

DR. MAIDA TAYLOR, A MEMBER of the Women Divers Hall of Fame (WDHOF), has been making inroads that may enhance diving safety for the entire diving community. Dr. Taylor, M.D., M.P.H., FACOG, an OBGYN and Senior Clinical Research Physician for Eli Lilly & Co., believes that diving medical issues concerning women

are becoming increasingly important. In the early days of diving, there were relatively few medical studies that included women, because diving was done almost exclusively by men in military and commercial projects. But over the last few decades, the number of women divers has grown (approximately 30 to 40 percent of all new divers today are women).

"I field questions about women's med-



Dr. Taylor is working to find the answers for female divers' medical questions.

ical issues every day, particularly concerning pregnancy," Dr. Taylor explains. "There are definite risks to the pregnant woman who dives, but the gravest danger is to the unborn child. We know that diving involves circulating bubbles, and any bubble which reaches the fetus may cause a fatal embolism. Therefore, we need to reinforce the message that women should not dive during pregnancy, or as soon as they start planning to have a child."

In addition to her work on diving during pregnancy, Dr. Taylor is currently studying the relationship between hormonal contraceptives and hormone replacement therapy and the incidence and severity of decompression illness.

The controversy over diving and estrogen dates back



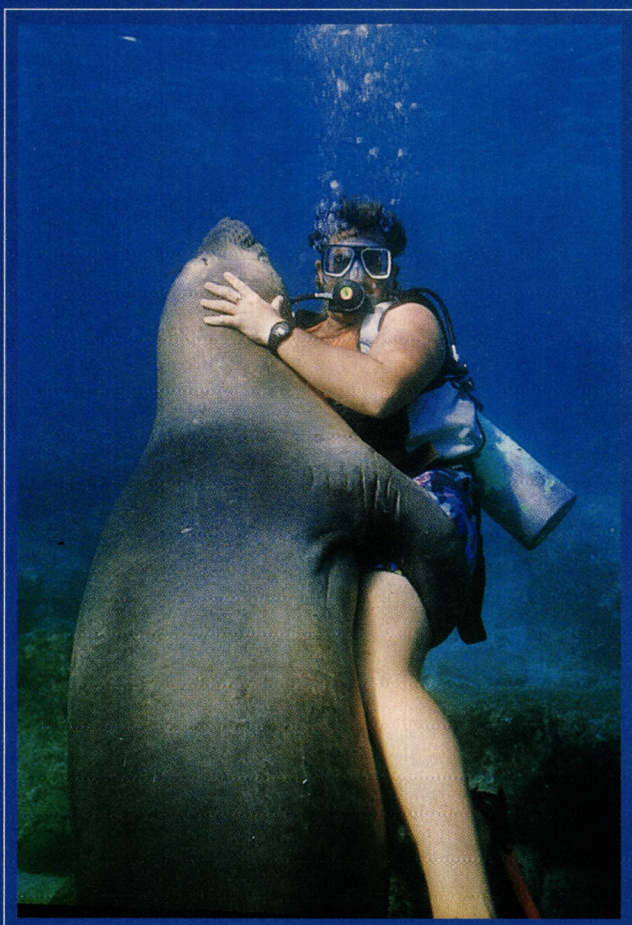
WOMEN DIVERS HALL OF FAME™

to the 1970s. Early studies demonstrated a 4 to 11 fold increased risk of a fatal embolism caused by blood clots in oral contraceptive users compared to non-users. As a result, the women who participated in the NOAA Tektite saturation dive project led by Dr. Sylvia Earle in 1970 were instructed to discontinue birth control pills three months prior. For many years, the U.S. NAVY and Coast Guard discouraged female divers from using oral contraceptives. Further research, however, disputed these findings.

Since the female diving population today contains a number of women nearing or at the age of menopause, the concern about estrogen, both in hormone replacement therapy as well as in birth control pills, is still being explored. Dr. Maida Taylor is determined to find answers, and given her dedication and energy, there is no doubt that she will. 🐟 —Hillary Viders

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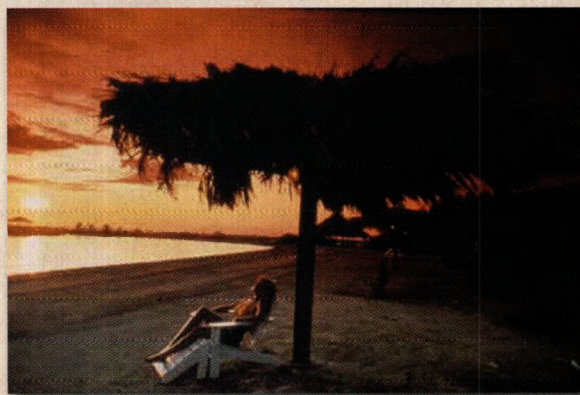


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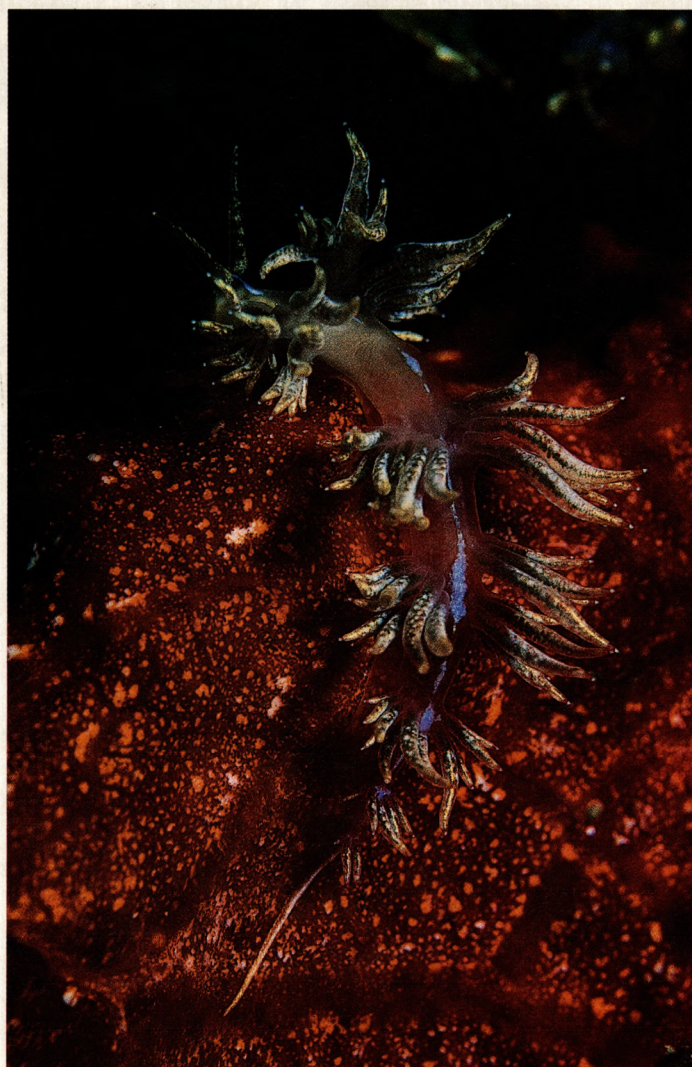
Photo and Video Competition

BY THE EDITORS

During the last week of August 2001, about 70 divers descended on Roatan in the Bay Islands of Honduras to focus, compose, light and hopefully capture an award-winning photo in *Skin Diver's* first Roatan U/W Photo Championship. On hand to help them in their quest were some of underwater photography's top pros: Marty Snyderman (at Anthony's Key Resort), Rick Frehsee (at Coco View Resort), Steve Simonsen (at Fantasy Island Resort), David Fleetham (at Bay Islands Beach Resort) and Jim Church (on the *Bay Islands Aggressor*). Also on hand to dispense advice and encouragement were *Skin Diver's* publisher, Guy Miller, and editor, Ty Sawyer.

Roatan expert Rick Frehsee kicked off the event with a slide show on Roatan, which, admittedly, was like dangling the goods in front of a bunch of hungry photographers. During the week-long event, the pros tutored, dived with the contestants and gave

seminars that both wowed and inspired the participants. Soon, word of the competition got out to divers vacationing on the island and the number of participants swelled to nearly 85 people. Then, a funny thing happened. About halfway through the



BEST OF SHOW

PETER RIEKSTINS

Grand Prize—Bay Island Aggressor trip for two

MACRO



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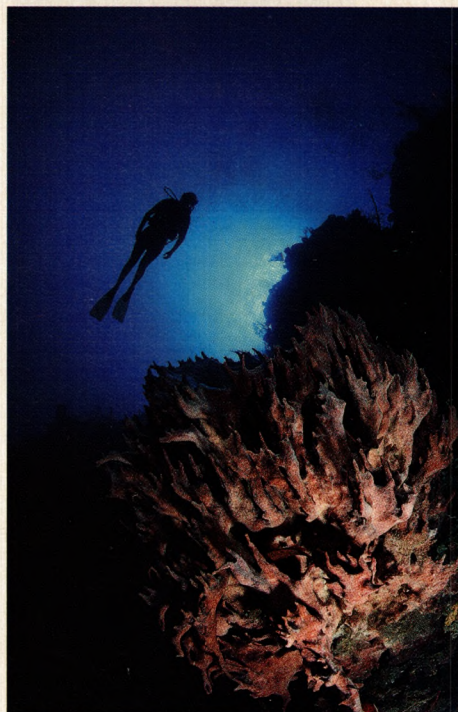
2nd STEVE ANDO

Sea & Sea Camera



3rd PETER RIEKSTINS

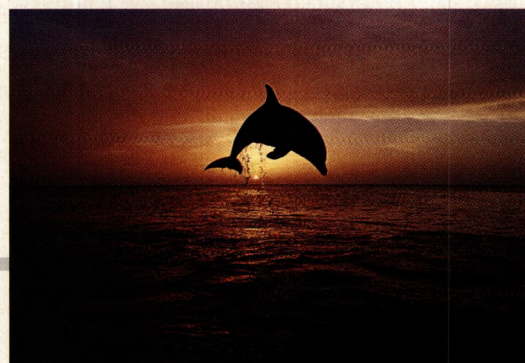
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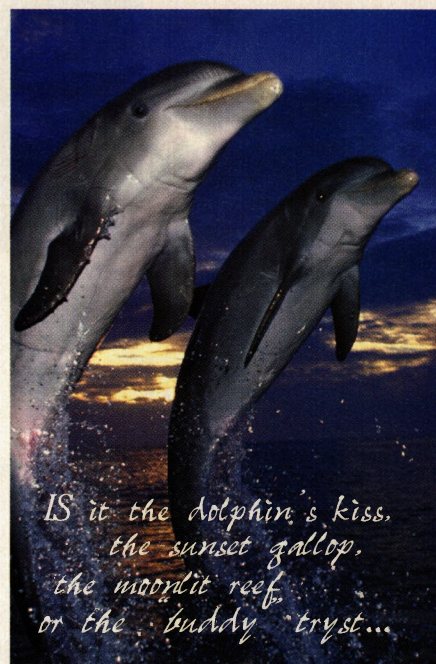
2nd JOHN MONK
Oceanic Computer

TOPSIDE

1st JOSH SMITH
Sea & Sea Strobes



2nd STEVE ANDO
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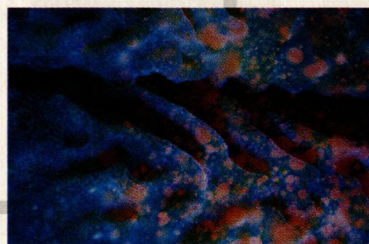
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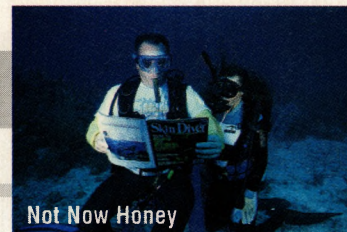


2nd PAUL LARAMEE
Oceanic computer



3rd ARIANE CRUZ
Oceanic regulator

HUMOR



JANET MARTIN (Images shown)
& **JODI JACOBSON** (Images not shown)
Framed certificate



Rule of Thirds

VIDEO

1st ANTA WERNER
Fantasy Island Beach Resort stay for two

2nd SCOTT ELOWITZ
Oceanic computer

3rd DENNIS KAYE
Oceanic regulator

week, friendships developed and the event changed tone from head-to-head competition to friendly camaraderie.

It was no longer about winning. Becoming a better shooter took over

people's focus, which is the best part of an event like this anyway. Everyone eagerly anticipated seeing the other contestants' images, even sharing finds underwater. And, no matter whether

the shooter was a first-time-using-a-camera novice or a wet veteran with the top gear, everyone got equal encouragement. That's probably why there were so many good shots in the end. Particularly thrilling for everyone was the opportunity to shoot dolphins both above (at sunset) and underwater, thanks to the hard-working dolphins at the Roatan Institute for Marine Sciences. Great shots came from all the islands many sites, including the shallows by the docks off Anthony's Key.

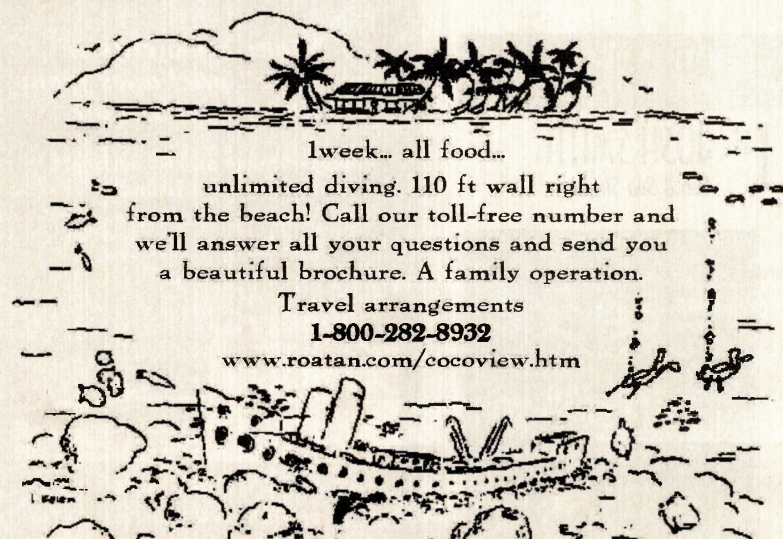
When the time came for the pros to decide the winners, it almost didn't matter. Everyone was busy swapping stories with the nearly 120 people who showed up for the closing night ceremony and awards banquet, which was held at Fantasy Island. As the pros each announced the category winners, everyone got a big cheer and congratulations.

While the prizes were incredible, including a grand prize of a free trip on the *Bay Islands Aggressor* for two, and the photos excellent, the event ended up being all about friends sharing a passion for diving and photography.

These are the top shots. Enjoy. 🐟

Special thanks to: Aggressor Fleet, Oceanic, Scubapro, Sea & Sea, Kodak, Anthony's Key Resort, Coco View Resort, Bay Islands Beach Resort, Fantasy Island, HammerHeads and especially, Kathy Knoll.

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CoCo View Resort
Roatan, Honduras Bay Islands

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-Peter Riekstins

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Malaysia's Magniti



Text and Photography by Al Hornsby

cent Kingdoms

From Rain Forest to Reef and Back Again



Vast schools of barracuda are commonly seen sweeping over the reefs.

Since this is in the "Strong Arm of the Dollar" section, I thought I'd relate this quick story. When I arrived at the Shangri-La Tanjung Aru resort, in the Malaysian city of Kota Kinabalu (the arrival point for tourism in Malaysian Borneo), I was expecting a "great deal." My travel agent had found a large, two-room suite at a beautiful, 5 Star resort for only \$125 U.S. Upon checking in, however, I discovered that not only had the rate been lowered to \$111 per night, but now, also included were a free breakfast buffet for two, free dinner buffet for two, free laundry, free international telephone access and free use of all watersports equipment at the resort!

(With the issue of "value" pretty well established, let's move to the real point of vacation travel to Malaysian Borneo—incredible diving and eco-adventure.)

Malaysian Borneo (in the state of Sabah) is considered one of the most biologically rich regions on earth. From its warm seas—it's at the convergence of the South China, Sulu and Sulawesi Seas—to the top of the 13,430-foot Mount Kinabalu, and throughout every conceivable rain forest bio-zone in between, the area has an incredible collection of plant and animal species, unsurpassed anywhere on earth.

To divers, of course, Borneo first brings to mind the famed island of Sipadan, long considered to be one of diving's top locations. And, although Sipadan remains as the crown-jewel of Malaysian diving, it is by no means alone. Also off the coast of Sabah are the islands of Mabul, Kapalai and Layang Layang, any one of which could make anyone's "best dives" list.

To reach Sipadan, Mabul and Kapalai, you fly from Los Angeles into Kota Kinabalu (usually just called "KK"), then take a 45-minute flight to the small town of Tawau, followed by a bus ride of 1.5 hours to the port town of Semporna, and from there, a 45-minute boat ride to the islands (Mabul and Kapali are within a mile of each other, Sipadan sits on the horizon about 8 miles farther to the south). Since the dive operations and resorts take care of all the transfers and local transportation, it's an easy trip; once you step off the plane, you and your bags are taken in hand and whisked away to what, for most visitors,

seems another world.

Sipadan is a tiny, unspoiled island that sits by itself in oceanic water of the richest blue imaginable. It is covered with forest that shades three island-style resorts, yet is so small that its white-powder sand shoreline can be circumnavigated in 15 minutes. Its western edge drops away to 900 feet just 50 feet offshore, with the rest of the island surrounded by an expanse of turquoise-hued shallows.

Virtually every point along Sipadan's surrounding wall is a dive site. Straight off the beach in front of the Borneo Divers resort, the drop-off is an excellent dive, night or day, with Whitetip Sharks, Napoleon Wrasse, a large school of Horse-eye Jacks, and anemones with clownfish and Porcelain Crabs. To the north, there is Barracuda Point, where huge, resident schools of

Sphyrna Barracuda, batfish and Horse-eye Jacks can be found nearly every morning.

In the other direction, Hanging



An ambling shark navigates the turquoise-hued shallows.



The insect life is almost as fascinating as the sealife.

Are You Ready to Go?

One of the best ways to experience Borneo is to sign up for the Underwater Malaysia International Imaging Festival, being held Sept. 4 to 14, 2002. Join world-famous photo pros, try the latest photo and video gear, enjoy the region's top resorts and dive some of the richest waters in the world (Kapalai, Labuan, Layang Layang, Mabul and Sipadan). For info, call Int'l Diving Expeditions at (800) 544-3483, or visit www.underwatermalaysia.com or www.skin-diver.com.

Gardens is a steep, vertical wall covered with gigantic soft corals and gorgonians. Everywhere, there are turtles—Greens, Hawksbills and Ridleys, and at various times of the day, in various places, you may be caught in Sipadan's unique stampede—more than 200 huge Bumphead Parrotfish that roam the reefs in daylight hours, then return in late afternoon to their roost on the wall in front of Borneo Divers.

Mabul and Kapalai, within sight of

the diving around Mabul and Kapalai is critter diving at its finest. The number and variety of species seen, dive after dive, is astounding. There are Frogfish, Crocodile Snake Eels, Blue Ribbon Eels, seahorses, stargazers, cuttlefish (such as Flamboyant Cuttlefish), the Blue-ring Octopus, a wild assortment of nudibranchs, Mandarinfish, exotic blennies and gobies, Ornate Ghost Pipefish—the list of macro-photography's "special species" seems near endless.

For the complete Borneo adventure you have to look beyond diving. From KK, it is easy to experience the area's incredible eco-adventure offerings.

Just a two-hour drive from KK, Mount

The Full Experience



Kinabalu, the highest mountain in Southeast Asia, is both a hiker's and a botanist's dream. The hike from the park level to the peak and back takes two days, with an overnight stay at a lodge at 11,000 feet. Along the way, there are rare orchids (with more than 1,200 species, the greatest known concentration on earth), birds and exotic insects. There are huge, tropical rain forest trees in the lower levels, stunted mist-forest vegetation in the mid-zones and alpine

meadow above the tree line; the entire mountain is criss-crossed with sparkling streams and dramatic waterfalls.

Just around the mountain from the park entrance, Poring Hot Springs is in the tropical lowland portion of the 186,000-acre park. Besides a system of natural hot springs pools (that can be utilized fully), a nature trail meanders up through the rain forest, with bamboo, flowers and gigantic trees. There are Gliding Lizards, butterflies, birds and the occasional racer snake. A treat is the canopy walkway—a long system of suspension bridges hanging in the trees 100 feet above the forest floor.

Nearby is the unique Sabah Tea Plantation. Besides being famed for its organically-grown tea, it has a guest house for visitors, in an idyllic mountain setting. It also features a nature reserve on a small mountain, where the rare, *Rafflesia* blooms, its three-foot wide flower alive for only days after a many month gestation. Additionally, there are 25 miles of mountain-biking trails and a river for kayaking and white-water rafting.

Another half-hour plane flight from KK takes you to the town of Sandakan, site of the Sepilok Forest reserve, home of the orangutan rehabilitation project. A hike through the sanctuary's virgin forest will reveal several species of monkeys, otters, birds, snakes and, of course, orangutans. The orangutans are marvelous creatures; you can sit and watch them for hours, their expressions and mannerisms so remarkably like our own.

Sipadan (visiting divers have the opportunity to dive all three places during their stays), are very different, but also very special. Kapalai is a sandbar, exposed only at low tide, with a single resort on stilts, Sipadan-Kapalai Resort, sitting atop it. Mabul is a small, Coconut Palm-covered island with a small fishermen's village and three resorts, including a luxurious on-the-water property, Sipadan Water Village.

Whether directly from the docks of the resorts or on the surrounding reefs,

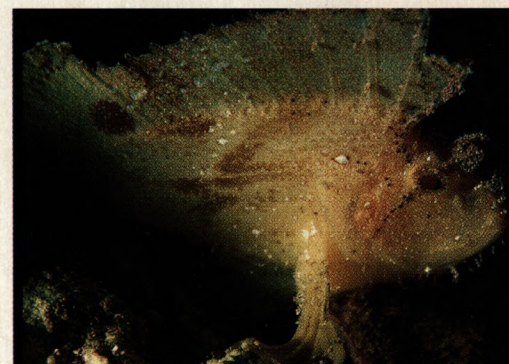
On the other side of Sabah, about 185 miles due west of KK in the South China Sea, is another special place, Layang Layang. It is a narrow strip of island with a huge circular lagoon. Far from any developed area, it harbors a pristine reef system with walls, coral gardens and inner-lagoon critter dives.

The Layang Layang Island Resort flies its guests in from KK in small planes, and the place is marvelous.

On the wall, because of the proximity to deep-ocean, there are large num-



A perfect path through the cloud forest. Below: A leaf scorpionfish in ambush mode.



bers of pelagics, such as Mantas, Scalloped Hammerheads, schooling barracuda and the occasional Whale Shark, especially at the dramatic sites of Gorgonian Forest, Dogtooth Lair and The Point. At Crack Reef and Wrasse Strip, coral garden diving is lush, with large numbers of lionfish, sweetlips, butterflyfish and triggerfish. For macro-enthusiasts, Layang Layang has its own collection, with Ornate Ghost Pipefish, blennies, gobies and Mandarinfish, to name only a few, many of them found just off the resort's dock.

Malaysian Borneo is indeed a magical place. Its exotic moods, its incredible scenery and its cornucopia of exotic life all will capture a visitor's imagination, leaving both an indelible memory and an unmistakable yearning to return. 🐟



thai spice

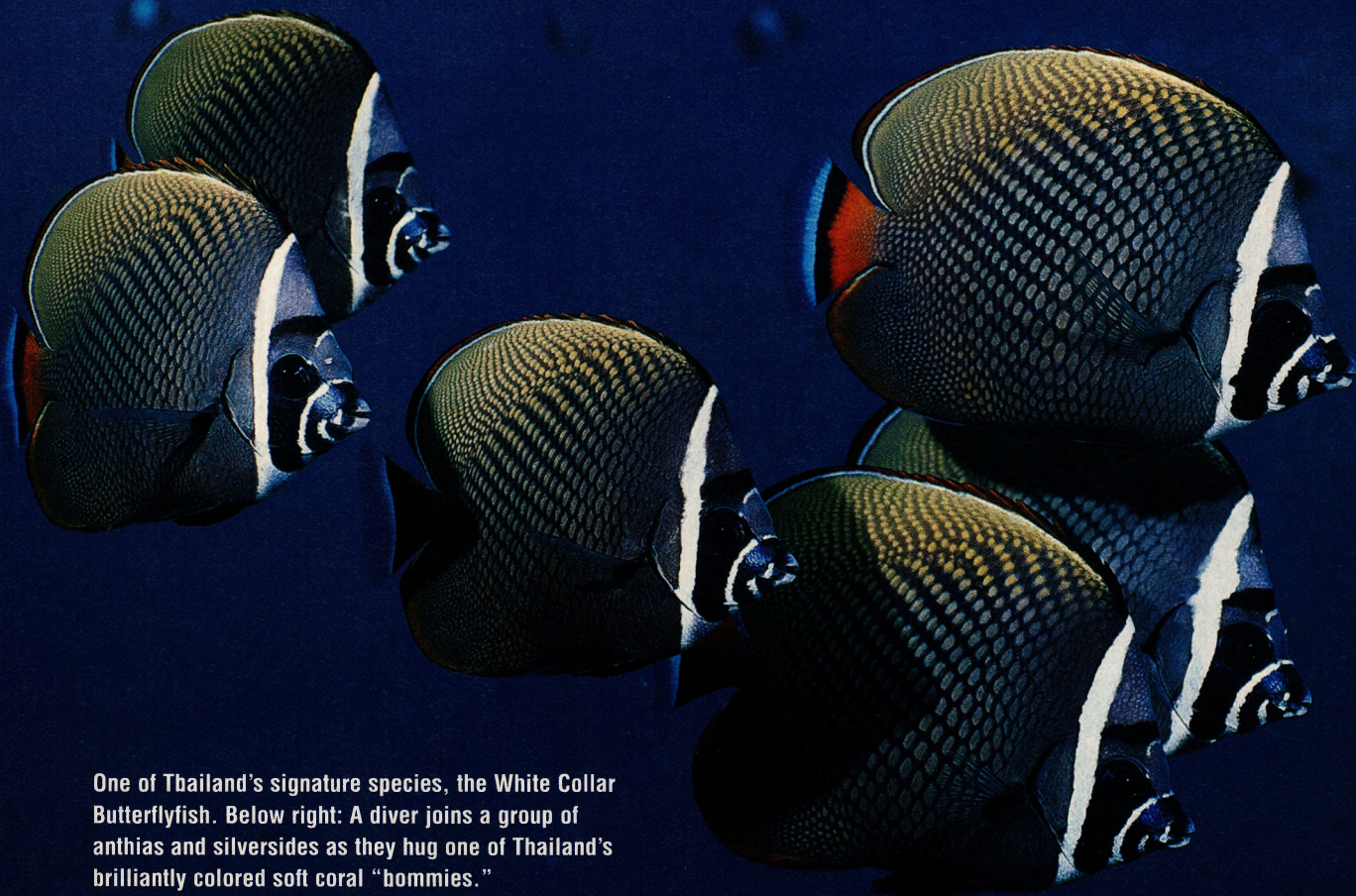


Three rival male Pharaoh Cuttlefish compete for the attraction of a female (background) laying eggs.

text and photography by mark strickland

If variety is the spice of life, then Thailand surely ranks among the spiciest of destinations. From its multi-faceted culture and stunning natural beauty to friendly people and exciting cuisine, diversity is an integral part of Thai life. There are many great reasons to visit this Southeast Asian kingdom, but the biggest attraction for me is the unique and varied underwater world. With its extensive coastlines, numerous islands and warm, tropical waters, the country seems to have been custom-designed for divers. Thailand is blessed with a wide spectrum of marine habitats, including coral gardens, rocky pinnacles, steep drop-offs, wrecks and more. Marine life also varies greatly, evidenced by a diverse population of creatures ranging from snails to whales. Professional dive operators can be found at many locations throughout the country, with programs to suit almost every interest and experience level. And, no matter what sort of visit you have in mind, it needn't cost an arm and a leg—Thailand offers some of the best values to be found anywhere.

Diving in Thailand takes place on both sides of a lengthy peninsula. The Gulf of Thailand, to the east, is actually an arm of the Pacific Ocean. On the opposite coast, the Andaman Sea forms the northeast border of the Indian Ocean. Both areas offer great scenery and a wealth of diving possibilities, yet are quite different from each other.



One of Thailand's signature species, the White Collar Butterflyfish. Below right: A diver joins a group of anthias and silversides as they hug one of Thailand's brilliantly colored soft coral "bommies."

GULF OF THAILAND Hot & Saucy

Infused with a relaxed ambiance and dotted with dozens of picturesque islands, the Gulf has always been a popular place for backpackers and travelers looking for cheap digs, diving, partying and kicking back.

The main attractions are three exotically scenic islands—Ko Phangan, Ko Samui and Ko Tao. Of these, Ko Phangan is renowned for its laid-back, bohemian beach atmosphere, while Ko Samui is somewhat more "up-market," yet still casual. Ko Tao is the undisputed leader for budget diving, mostly due to its offshore location.

Two top dive sites are Sail Rock and Chumphon Pinnacle, each of which is known for dramatic topography, big black corals, schooling fish and fairly regular Whale Shark encounters. Both are an easy day-trip from Ko Tao and Ko Samui. Actually, nearly all Gulf-side diving is shore-based, but a few operators do offer live-aboard trips to more distant sites, at least sporadically. Among these destinations are Ko Losin and Ko Kra, both of which feature prolific hard coral and sponges, clear water and occasional

Manta and Whale Shark sightings. Both can be reached from May through September, from Ko Samui. Another interesting remote site is the Vertical Wreck, a tanker that sank in 1997 and now rests in an unusual, bow-up position. Although coral is sparse, the wreck does attract big schools of batfish, jacks and barracuda, and typically has great visibility. Weekend trips leave from Pattaya, where there are also two local wrecks, the *Hardeep* and the *Petchburi Bremen*.

ANDAMAN SEA Gourmet Delicacy

While the Gulf has its own special charms, most serious divers gravitate to the Andaman Sea, where visibility is often better, marine life more diverse, and dive programs are more varied. Each of the five main regions—Phuket, Phi Phi, Southern Islands, Similans and Northern Islands—has its own special appeal.

Phuket: A large, well-developed resort island, Phuket is the traditional gateway to the Andaman Sea

and home to a vast array of dive operations. Aside from being the most popular place to begin a live-aboard trip, Phuket also has some good diving within day-



trip range. While visibility is often limited, sites like Anemone Reef and Shark Point are literally covered with soft corals and anemones, with resident fish including clownfish, lionfish, morays and friendly Zebra Sharks.

Phi Phi: Spectacular topography dominates the Phi Phi Islands, both topside and underwater. Steep limestone cliffs punctuate the landscape and continue underwater as shallow walls riddled with crevices, caverns and caves. Marine life includes black coral, various crustaceans, Blue-ring Angelfish, scorpionfish, Blue-spotted Stingrays and lots of interesting invertebrates.

Southern Islands: Hin Daeng (Red Rock) and its sister site, Hin Muang (Purple Rock) are remote limestone pinnacles surrounded by deep, open water. Both reefs tumble almost verti-

beaches and lush green interiors surrounded by sparkling blue water, the Similans' topside scenery is rivaled only by that below the surface. East-facing sites are mostly sloping, hard coral reefs, while the west-side features huge granite boulders stacked upon each other, forming numerous caverns and passageways. Both sides have an abundance of sea fans, soft corals and crinoids, all of which thrive in the frequently brisk currents. These islands also support a wide range of invertebrates like Mantis Shrimp, octopus and an always fascinating selection of nudibranchs. An exceptionally diverse fish population also calls the Similans home, including various wrasse, angelfish and butterflyfish, plus exotics like frogfish, ribbon eels and Purple Fire Gobies. The Similans can be reached by fast day-boats from Phuket or Khao Lak.

Northern Islands: The most popular and arguably best dive site in this region is Richelieu Rock, a limestone pinnacle east of Ko Surin. It is home to an incredible variety of marine life, including dense colonies of soft coral, Orange Cup Coral, and sea anemones.

Cuttlefish are regular visitors, as are thorny oys-

Aside from excellent diving and topside attractions, another great reason to visit Thailand is value, particularly for diving, food and accommodations. The Gulf-side islands of Ko Tao, Ko Samui and Ko Phangan are especially budget-oriented, but great deals can be found anywhere in the country. Regardless of cost, however, service is nearly always great, and warm Thai hospitality is a given.

thai
value

Ready for a change of pace from diving? Thailand offers so many diversions that you're bound to run out of time before exhausting the possibilities. Especially recommended is sea kayaking and elephant trekking, which should be on your short list of "must-do"s. Of course Thai—land is also brimming with cultural attractions; be sure to visit at least one Buddhist temple or Wat, or take a stroll through any neighborhood market. For unadulterated relaxation, try the excellent, inexpensive (\$10 U.S.) beachside massages.

thai
topside

For divers who want to get the most bang to their diving buck, live-aboard trips are clearly the way to go. Aside from getting more dives per dollar, it's hard to beat the convenience of simply stepping over the side to the dive site. And, some of Thailand's best sites are too remote to be reached by day-trip.

With an estimated 75 live-aboards in the Andaman Sea, there are plenty to choose from, with programs to suit nearly any budget.

thai
live-aboards



Above: A nudibranch feeds on stinging hydroids. Below: The incredible landscapes of Phi Phi Island are only a hint of the fantastic shapes below the water's surface.

cally to 150 feet or more, providing the only real wall diving in Thailand. Resident creatures include cuttlefish, Giant Morays, Red-bar Anthias and occasional Zebra Sharks. Hin Muang also features thriving soft corals and huge, sinewy fields of anemones. Whale Sharks and Mantas are seen with frequency at both sites. Particularly interesting is the cavern at Ko Ha Yai, where you can surface in a spacious air chamber in which clouds actually form due to air pressure fluctuations.

Similans: Roughly 60 miles from Phuket, these nine rocky islands have been called the "Jewel of Thailand's Marine National Parks," and include over a dozen top dive sites. With white sand

ter, murex shells, Porcelain Crabs and several species of cleaner shrimp. Ambush predators such as scorpionfish and lizardfish lurk on nearly every rock, patiently waiting for unwary prey. White-eyed Morays slither about investigating crevices, closely followed by gangs of snapper. Above the reef, schools of Rainbow Runners, Bigeye Jacks and Chevron Barracuda swirl among clouds of silversides. Richelieu is the kind of place where almost anything can be seen, including rarities like ghostpipefish, sea-



horses, Harlequin Shrimp and even Whale Sharks. 🐟

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Malaysia Airlines is the domestic airline, and the best route for U.S. residents is Los Angeles to Kota Kinabalu (18 hrs), then on to final destination (Layang Layang, Sipadan, Mabul). • **Malaysia Airlines** (800) 552-9264 www.malaysiaairlines.com **FACTS & TIPS:** **Best Time To Visit:** Maximum visibility is from April to October. Clothing recommendations: tropical casual. **Topside Climate:** Warm and tropical, but moderated by the surrounding ocean. Temperatures are usually in the 80s°F, with a typical range of about 75 to 95°F. **Water Temperature:** 78 to 86°F. **Exchange Rate:** 3.8 Malaysian Ringgit = 1.00 (USD) U.S. dollars and major credit cards are accepted at various resorts and hotels, and in airport shops. **Time Difference:** EST plus 12 hours. **WHOLESALEERS:** **International Diving Expeditions** (800) 544-3483 www.love2travel.com **RESORTS:** **Layang Layang:** **Layang Layang Resort** (011) 603-2162-2877 www.layanglayang.com **Kapalai:** **Sipadan Kapalai Dive Resort** (011) 60-89-765-200 sipadan-kapalai.com (do not use www.sipadan-kapalai.com) **Mabul:** **Seaventures Tours & Travel** (011) 60-88-251-669 www.borneo-online.my/sv • **Sipadan Mabul Resort** (011) 60-88-230-006 www.sipadan-mabul.com.my • **Sipadan Water Village** (011) 60-89-752-996 www.sipadanvillage.com.my **Sipadan: Borneo Divers & Sea Sports** (011) 60-88-222-226 www.jaring.my/bdivers/ • **North Borneo Dive & Sea Sports** (011) 60-89-769-950 www.fortunecity.com/marina/paradise/132 • **Sipadan Dive Center** (011) 60-88-240-584 www.jaring.my/sipadan • **Sipadan Lodge** (011) 60-88-230-000 **TOPSIDE ADVENTURES:** **Kinabalu Park** www.sabah tourism.com • **Sabah Tea Plantation** e-mail: weston@tm.net.my • **Sepilok Orangutan Rehabilitation Center** (011) 60-89-531-180 www.jaring.my/sabah/sepilok.htm **RESOURCES:** **Malaysia Travel** (888) 359-8655 www.malaysiatravel.com • **Sabah Tourism** www.sabahtourism.com • **Tourism Malaysia West Coast** (800) 336-6842 www.tourismmalaysia.com • **Tourism Malaysia East Coast** (800) 558-6787 www.visitmalaysia.com • **Tourism Malaysia** www.tourism.gov.my • **Lonely Planet Guide to Malaysia** www.lonelyplanet.com • **Skin Diver Online** www.skin-diver.com

Thailand

GETTING THERE:

A host of international carriers (including Thai Airways International [THAI], China Airlines, Korean Airlines, Pam Air and CP Air) service Don Muang, Bangkok's major airport. The departure tax on international flights is around \$13, but this is waived if you're in the country for less than 12 hours. **FACTS & TIPS:** **Best Time To Visit:** November through April (dry season). **Topside Climate:** Tropical. Dry season is mostly sunny, with occasional evening showers. **Water Temperature:** Usually 79 to 84°F, although thermoclines may temporarily drop temps to low 70s°F. **Exchange Rate:** 1.00 (USD) = 45 Thai Baht **Time Difference:** EST + 12 hours (6 PM in New York is 6 AM the next day in Thailand). **LIVE-ABOARDS & DIVE OPERATORS:** **M/V Aquaone** (888) 996-2782 www.dive-aquasports.com • **Andaman Scuba** (011) 66-76-331-006 www.andamanscuba.com • **Atlantis** (503) 212-5452 www.atlantis-asia.com • **M/V Discovery** (Santana Diving) (011) 66-76-294-220 www.santanaphuket.com • **Dive Asia Pacific** (800) 962-0395 www.dive-asiapacific.com • **Dive Master Co. Ltd.** (011) 66-76-280-330 www.divemaster.net • **Genesis** (011) 66-76-280-607 www.genesis1phuket.com • **High Class Adventure** (011) 66-76-344-337 www.highclass-adventure.com • **"The Junk"** June Hong Chian Lee (011) 66-76-342-186 www.thejunk.com • **Fantasea Divers/Ocean Rover** (011) 66-76-281-388 www.fantasea.net • **Ocean Rover** (011) 66-76-281-388 www.ocean-rover.com • **PIDC Divers** (011) 66-76-280-644 www.pidc-divers.com • **Scuba Cat Diving** (011) 66-76-293-120 www.scubacat.com • **Scuba Quest** (011) 66-76-385-143 www.scuba-quest.com • **ScubaGlobe** (Phuket) www.scubaglobe.com • **Sea Bees** (011) 66-76-381-765 www.sea-bees.com • **Sea World Dive Team** (011) 66-76-341-595 www.seaworld-phuket.com • **Siam Dive n'Sail** (Phuket) (011) 66-76-330-967 www.siamdivers.com **RESORTS:** **Palm Beach Travelodge Resort** (Phi Phi) (011) 66-76-214-654 www.phiphi-palmbeach.com • **PP Princess** (Koh Phi Phi) (011) 66 75 622-079 www.phuket.com/ppprincess • **Tonsai Village Resort** (Phi Phi) (011) 66-2-304-0423 www.sawadee.com/krabi/tonsavillage **RESOURCES:** **Tourism Authority of Thailand** www.tourismthailand.org • **Lonely Planet Guide to Thailand** www.lonelyplanet.com • **Skin Diver Online** www.skin-diver.com



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BY THE STAFF AND CONTRIBUTORS OF *SKIN DIVER*



50 States

Alabama Little Rome



We call it Little Rome because dozens of old bridge pilings rise out of the depths, bent and broken like classic Roman ruins. The Corps of Engineers put them there when the bridge that connects the Florida

Panhandle to Alabama's Gulf Coast (better known as the Redneck Riviera) was replaced in 1989. The cement pilings were barged nine miles south of Gulf Shores (right across the Florida state line), dropped into 90 feet and stayed standing. They rise up to 60 feet, blanketed in barna-

cles, crabs and tiny critters. Viz is 30 to 80 feet, and divers mostly spearfish prolific schools of amberjack, snapper, occasional grouper, lots of triggerfish and a few lobsters who, like too many tourists, got lost on their way to Florida and stayed in Alabama.

—FRED D. GARTH

Alaska Seldovia

Photographers and explorers alike will love Seldovia's colorful kelp-covered reefs, full of fish, 8-foot-long Wolf Eels, Giant Pacific

Octopus and huge beach-towel size

Sunflower Stars. Down the road is Jakolof Bay, where a nursery of life exists. Visibility is usually best during the winter, but acceptable year-round, with water temperature varying between 38 to 58°F. By boat, a myriad of other areas offer bottle hunting, sand-dwelling critters and a vast array of invertebrate life. —BARB ROY



Arizona

Ringbolt Rapids, Colorado River

A few miles south of Hoover Dam, the Colorado River offers one of the most exhilarating and unique dives you will ever experience. In the 54°F, 5- to 12-knot river, you'll



blow past an old work barge, crowds of Striped Bass, giant Carp, freshwater clams, as well as sunglasses and other "lost" treasures awaiting discovery. You'll have to wear a hard hat of some kind and it's best to go with a guide who knows the routes. The

viz is generally excellent (30 to 40 feet). One hell of a ride.

Arkansas Norfolk Lake

Among the 29 dive sites within a couple of miles of the marina, divers will find natural rock formations, such as Devil's Backbone, foundations of homesites (tile floors, fruit cellars) from prior to the lake being dammed in the early 1940s, a bulldozer and wrecks such as the *Slompoke*, a 30-foot cabin cruiser in 20 to 40 feet of water. There are dives for beginners and veterans, as well as cave dives and wall dives on a stone bluff, four to five stories high. Dive site maps are available in the marina.

The surrounding wilderness is largely responsible for the pristine water conditions. Viz is at its best during the spring (50 to 60 feet), and at its lowest during the winter (10 feet) when the lake turns over. Summer viz averages 20 to 30 feet, and 40 feet as you get deeper. Spring and summer offer the best conditions. Temps mid-summer 85°F, and at 25 feet is the thermocline, below which temp drops to approximately 68°F. During the winter the lake doesn't freeze, but low water temps and viz can be trying.

California San Clemente Island

My favorite dive in California. San Clemente Island, the southernmost of the Channel Islands, is surrounded by magical kelp forests and is frequented by Bat Rays, sea lions and scads of kelp forest critters, such as Giant

Kelp Fish, Black Sea Bass, schools of Blacksmith, Horn Sharks, Green Morays, Spanish Shawl nudibranchs and legions of Spiny Lobsters (although San Clemente is often called "land of shorts"). The Navy owns the island (it's a Navy SEAL training base), so divers are

warned not to fiddle with any ordinance they might encounter. Top sites such as Pyramid Cove, Second Boilers and the Towers are world-class with a great variety of topography and marine life. —T.S.



Connecticut Valve Wreck at Fishers Island Sound

The Valve Wreck at Fishers Island Sound is the wreck of a small 1900s-era tug boat. The nickname "Valve Wreck" came from divers who seemed to turn up an endless supply of brass valves from the site. The wreck sits at 68 feet and is best viewed during the months of April through November, when visibility averages 15 (ebb tide) to 30 feet (flood tide). Water temperatures average 58°F during these months, but is warmest during July at 65°F.

The boat's true name is unknown, but it is believed to have been built locally because some items recovered from the area were manufactured in nearby towns. The wreck is broken up, but large items such as the rudder, prop and tow bar are easy to spot sticking up in the sand. The bow is buried in the sand. This wreck is not known by the local fisherman, so it holds some great marine life, including lobsters.

The Valve Wreck is in an area of heavy current and must be dived only at slack tide. Access to the wreck is from boat only. It's about a 25-minute ride out from New London, CT. —CAPTAIN GARY CHELLIS

Colorado Aurora Lake

For a state famous for its ski bums, Colorado surprisingly is home to the country's largest land-locked population of divers and an active Colorado Scuba Retailers Association (CSRA). The CSRA has in turn developed Aurora Reservoir into a divers' Rocky Mountain playland. The lake has a 100 by 100 yard area just for the use of divers, and it averages about 20 feet of



viz. The CSRA sunk a twin-engine Beechcraft, which offers a nice refuge for the lake's legions of Perch and tasty crayfish (described by A-1 Scuba's Scott Taylor as "big enough to ride") in 30 to 35 feet of cold, drysuit or 7 mm wetsuit water. Recently SSI, PADI and Vicencia and Buckley sponsored a safety deck for training, and local diver Jim Rowledge sets up a navigation course during the warmer summer season.

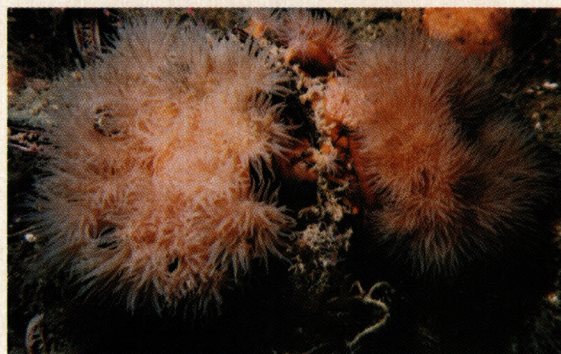
Georgia Gray's Reef

Talk about National Marine Sanctuaries, and people instantly think of the Florida Keys or California's Channel Islands or the Texas Flower Gardens. And all the while, lying quietly off the Georgia Coast, a mere 17 miles east of Sapelo Island, is another National Marine Sanctuary called Gray's Reef. At depths of 60 to 70 feet, this rich marine ecosystem is comprised of 8- to 12-foot ledges that run over flat-bottomed troughs. Invertebrates are prolific here, as are grouper, mackerel and a host of tropicals, such as angelfish. This area is also home to Loggerhead Turtles and is a breeding ground for Northern Right Whales. Divers can expect an hour or longer boat ride and visibility running 30 to 50 feet on average.

Delaware The Washingtonian

The *Washingtonian* lies upside down at 90 feet with the highest relief (the bow) at about 20 feet. You can swim right through the bow section, which is a hangout for large schools of Tautog and sea bass, popular with the spearfishermen. Entering the boiler room, you swim aft, past the enormous boilers, the engine and out the stern, where she breaks down into a debris field of large broken hull plates. These make an excellent home for the local divers' favorite prey—lobster. During the height of the season, from June through September, the bottom temperatures range from 45 to 65°F. The warmer Gulfstream waters filter in toward the end of the season and bring with them

Sand Tiger Sharks, butterflyfish and larger schools of baitfish. The visibility runs about 20



feet on average, but on any given day can be an awesome 100 feet or a disappointing 5 feet. This is arguably the most visited wreck off the Delaware and Maryland coast. —TRISH BOYER

Florida Molasses Reef

Nestled in the protective boundaries of the John Pennekamp State Park, Molasses Reef is the prettiest little patch of coral this side of the Bahamas. Day boats take divers and snorkelers out from Key Largo to sites marked by mooring buoys (translate: no anchor damage to the reef). Here, mere mortals can witness

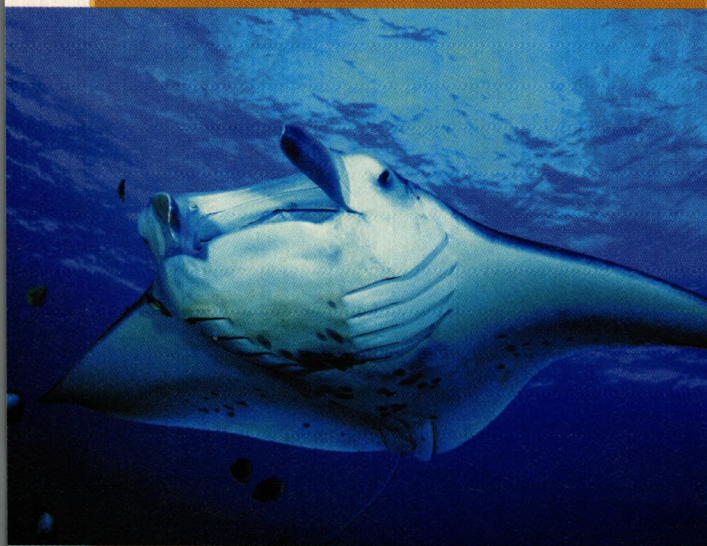
fish and coral formations like nowhere else in the continental United States. A classic spur and groove formation sprawls out over pure white sand and is home to turtles, morays, barracudas, brightly colored sponges, sea fans, hard corals and more.



Hawaii Molokini Crater

Choosing only one dive site from the plethora that the Hawaiian Islands have to offer can cause quite a headache. I guess that's a good thing. After the throb of indecision finally subsided, I settled on Molokini Crater, which lies a few miles off Maui's southwest coast. This submerged volcanic crater, with a crescent-shaped rim that rises 160 feet above the surface of the water, is a nature preserve and provides ample opportunities for both scuba and snorkeling. Divers can look forward to clear waters (the viz frequently exceeds 100 feet), reefs crowded with a wide array of friendly fish and marine life (450 species, 25 percent of which are endemic to Hawaii, some found only off Molokini), and a varied terrain of walls, reefs and ledges. There are also night dives that will spoil a diver for life, and, weather permitting, Molokini's more challenging back side.

The two-tank night dive was my favorite. The first dive took us down at dusk, when the fish were scavenging about for their last meal of the day, while those looking for breakfast moved in. Once the night had fully taken hold, we descended for the second dive and the unique creatures put on a parade of Mardis Gras proportions. A few of the participants in the festivities were a Short Arm Sand Octopus, a Crocodile Eel poking its head out of the sand, slipper lobster, oval squid, Blacktip and Gray Reef Sharks, a trio of

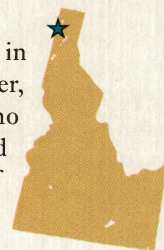


cuttlefish that was brave enough to remain suspended in a spotlight for more than five minutes, and a friendly, 5-foot Yellowmargin Moray named "Garbanzo" with his smaller *amigo*, "Bean."

Winter water temperatures can drop to 72°F in January and reach a high of 82°F in August; at least a 3 mm wetsuit is recommended during the winter. — R.A.

Idaho Cour D'Alene Lake

With more than 200 wrecks that range in size from a canoe to a 165-foot steamer, Cour D'Alene Lake in Northern Idaho could aptly be described as a landlocked Bermuda Triangle. When Ed Hastie of Divers West was asked if anything remained afloat on the lake for long, he chuckled evasively and instead described the latest wreck sunk there, the *Seemeewanna*, a penetrable excursion boat. Wrecks aren't all that inhabit the lake—pike, bass, sunfish, perch, various bottomfeeders and even a rare Sturgeon are encountered. Divers also "scrounge-dive" under the marina where boaters lose all kinds of interesting treasures. The water ranges from 60°F in summer to 40 to 50°F in winter, when ice diving takes over. Most dives are shore-accessed and viz ranges from 10 to 30 feet depending on the season.



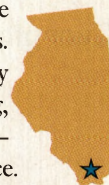
Illinois Mermet Springs

Mermet Springs is an 8.5-acre, spring-fed quarry, devoted to diving and dive training. The quarry has 100-foot sheer walls that can be followed to depths of 120 feet.

There are numerous points of interest for bubble blowers, such as a sunken Boeing 727 (used in the movie *U.S. Marshals*). Two Giant "Blue Cat" Catfish were added to the Mermet Springs fish family in June 2001, each weighing between 70 and 75 pounds. Additional features of the dive site include a newly sunken boat at 50 feet, electric lights for night diving, ceiling fans in the pavilions to keep divers more comfortable between dives and U/W camera rental service.

Divers can expect a thermocline at 30 to 35 feet, with 10 to 15+ foot viz above, 15 to 25 feet and better below. The surface temperature is 60°F, with a bottom temperature of 42°F.

Visit www.mermetsprings.com for more details.



Indiana Sunset Lake

Sunset Lake is a city park of Linton, IN. The quarry is an old coal mine strip pit with depth ranges from 12 to 30 feet. The bottom is mud and gravel with four platforms; other highlights include a school bus, a car, a statue and a few old boats.

The visibility is best in the early and late parts of the year because of the shallow depths. However, in midsummer, an



PHOTOS: (H) DAVID FLETHAM; (IL) COURTESY MERMET SPRINGS; (IN) MARK BROOKS. OPPOSITE PAGE: (ME) JONATHAN BIRD

Iowa Lake Okoboji, Arnolds Park

Lake Okoboji is one of the handful of blue water lakes in the world, formed by a glacier “way back when.” Divers can look for rock reefs, an underwater water tower, boats, pipelines and bountiful fishlife, including bass, perch, panfish, Croppie, Bluegill and muskie. During the spring, the bass lay eggs in nests, over which the males hover, protecting their offspring. “Muck diving” is a favorite pastime, during which antique bottles can be found. Buffalo

bones have also been discovered, and some are currently being dated.

The lake usually turns over twice a year, spring and winter; viz tends to be around 8 to 10 feet when this occurs. The best time for diving is April and May, when the viz is 40+. Summer temps range 75 to 80°F. During the winter, the lake freezes over with temps averaging 34°F. Ice diving comes into fashion and viz can top 100 feet. The deepest point is 136 feet.



Kansas Wilson Lake

When most scuba fans who call Kansas “home” are asked their favorite local dive site, they respond “Arkansas,” “Missouri” or “New Mexico.” The only site in the state that divers will admit to visiting is Wilson Lake, which boasts a viz of 5 feet—on a good day. Wilson Lake, on the Saline River, features 9,000 acres of water and 100 miles of shoreline. Over the years, tornados have deposited a number of sightseeing opportunities into the lake, such as farm equipment, cars and boats. But again, unless you can find them, it really doesn’t matter. Which brings up the issue of navigation. If you do venture into Lake Wilson’s murky waters, be sure to be up-to-date on your navigational skills, as you may need them to find your way back to shore.



Kentucky Dive Cerulean

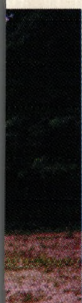
Dive Cerulean is a beautiful 16-acre clear spring water dive site. Originally a rock quarry abandoned in 1952, the area is now filled with water and owned by David and Cindy Westerfield. Dive operators often use this spot as a training site, as it includes an underwater training platform and provides excellent dive conditions. Visibility averages 28 to 35 feet and water temperatures average 80°F during the summer months.

Divers at Dive Cerulean can explore everything from an old Cadillac and other sunken vehicles to building walls and a cabin cruiser wreck. Bass, crayfish and Bluegill keep divers company and a vast array of underwater plant life has taken residence.

For more information, visit www.divecerulean.com.



algae bloom restricts the visibility. While diving in the quarry, divers will enjoy Bluegill and bass. There are also buoys on the items that are placed around the quarry for easy access. There is a primary camping ground available with sites, electric outlets and water. There is not a bathhouse, and the restrooms are in outhouses. The entrance fee to dive is \$5.00 per day/per diver. —MARK BROOKS



Louisiana Steel Reefs



There are over 3,800 oil and gas structures in the Gulf of Mexico, but the most popular ones are found some 30 miles offshore of Louisiana. These immense structures often cover an acre in area, towering above the water, while below, their structure makes them unique artificial reefs.

The encrusted beams serve as home to sponges, crabs, lobsters, blennies, damsels and barnacles. Some of the best spearfishing in the Gulf can be found here as well—Black Drum, Cobia, mutton, Red Snapper and barracuda. These open-water structures also shelter schools of Atlantic Spadefish, triggerfish and even occasional Whitetip Sharks.

Most rig diving takes place in the summer, when the seas are calm; water temperatures average 75°F and visibility varies between 50 and 200 feet, depending on plankton blooms. During the winter, chances of diving the rigs are cut in half, but if you can brave currents, thermoclines and water temps in the mid-50s to low 60s°F, the payoff is 100+ viz.

Maine Deer Island, Eastport

One of the best kept secrets in New England diving, Eastport Maine lies as far north as you



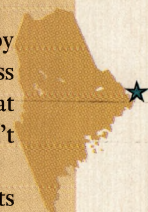
can go in Maine on the coast, a six-hour drive from Boston. At the edge of Passamaquoddy

Bay, an offshoot of the Bay of Fundy, Eastport experiences tidal fluctuations of up to 30 feet. The massive tides give rise to swift currents that nurture huge marine life growth, but they also mean that the diving must be done at slack tide.

One of the most exciting dives in Eastport can be done either from shore or by boat. Deer Island is only an island at high tide. At low tide, you can walk to it across the seaweed-covered pebble beach and enjoy an amazing dive on a vertical wall that drops from the surface to over 200 feet. Use a tide table and get there early. Don’t enter until the water slows down to a trickle, and bring your macro lens!

Underwater, expect to see hundreds of *tealia* anemones, pink soft corals, lots of nudibranchs, skulpins, Sea Ravens, Ocean Pout, vast schools of Pollack and herring, monster lobsters (protected by law from divers) and if you’re lucky, a pair of Atlantic Wolffish hiding in their hole. Water temperature ranges from the low 30s in the spring to about 50°F in the late summer. Visibility ranges 15 to 30 feet.

—JONATHAN BIRD



Maryland East Bay Oyster Beds



The late '80s and early '90s were a bad time for Chesapeake Bay Oysters. Rising pollution, water salinity and disease plagued these prized mollusks. However, the mighty oyster is seeing a resurgence, thanks to a combination of environmental clean-ups, more rain and what appears to be a natural adaptation to disease. Over the last three years, at least one charter boat captain has been taking divers out to enjoy the new bounty in the Eastern Bay area of the Chesapeake. Oyster diving is open from October through March, with the warmer, beginning months the more popular ones. No license or special tools are needed, just a good pair of gloves. Each diver is allowed one bushel of oysters, three inches or larger, and reaching one's limit is virtually guaranteed. Water temps are chilly, beginning at 65°F in October and dipping into the high 30s°F in the dead of winter, but the diving itself is not difficult. Most beds are 10 to 15 feet deep and visibility runs 5 to 20 feet. Divers descend with a goody bag and can easily come back to the boat to empty it once full. One of the biggest treats then comes on the ride home, when a couple of pots are put on the fire and freshly steamed oysters are had all around.

For information, contact Captain Gerry MacDonald (410) 215-9135.



Massachusetts Halfway Rock



Halfway Rock has seen it all. Midway between Cape Ann and Boston, it has been a crossroads of New England sea travel for 450 years.

For the first 400 years, passing

travelers had no idea of the rock's hidden beauty. Above the surface, a 30-foot granite pinnacle with Gull guano creates the appearance of a graying sage. Boston and Gloucester are visible on the horizon. Below is a 60-foot vertical drop covered with pastel corals, sponges and anemones. Hydroids and Nudibranchs add colorful accent.

At some point, tear your attention away from the wall, because this is one of those rare places in the North Atlantic where, on the same dive, large pelagic life may compete for your attention. Mola Mola, sharks and Bluefish are common in summer. The wall begins at 30 feet and bottoms at 100 feet with plenty to see at any depth.

A unique convergence of history and beauty, Halfway Rock may be the best dive in New England.

—DAVE MILLHOUSER

Michigan

The M.E. Tremble, St. Clair River

Consider the facts: a century-plus old wooden schooner that lies in 52 to 65 feet of water, yet lights aren't needed unless the sun's down. Tools and artifacts are still found there; a Lighter immediately adjacent even has its single-cylinder steam engine. Oh! And to get to it, you leap off an 8-foot-high seawall and traverse an acre of six-knot river current, while thousand-foot freighters pass overhead. That's the St. Clair River wreck of the M.E. Tremble, sunk between Port Huron, MI, and Sarnia, Ontario. It's a dive so advanced that divers take specialty courses just to do it, but the reward is an action-packed trip to the time machine that only a Great Lakes shipwreck can be.—TOM MORRISEY

Minnesota The Cuyuna Mine Pits



The Cuyuna Mine Pits are a series of abandoned open-pit iron ore mines near the Central Minnesota resort community of Brainerd. With over 50 established dive sites scattered among the 22 mines, it's hard to pick a favorite. The dive site Shangri-La, however, offers much of what is typical of the aquatic attractions. The 30 to 75 feet of visibility reveals a terraced bottom contour that boasts exciting sheer walls (some mines are over 500 feet deep) and forested underwater meadows, that support a diverse fish population. Summer water temperatures in the 70s°F also make it enjoyable for those who like exploring the many mining remnants scattered throughout the region.—TODD MATTHIES



Mississippi Horseshoe Rigs

Pop a Dramamine and find a comfortable seat if you want to make the 74-mile run to the Horseshoe Rigs off of Biloxi, Mississippi. Known locally as “vertical reefs,” these oil rigs form their namesake horseshoe over a 12-mile area and stand in approximately 360 feet of water. Most diving is from 40 feet to the recreational limit of 130.

Giant barracuda, massive schools of snapper, grouper, amberjack and baitfish, as well as Eagle Ray sightings make the long boat ride more than worth it. Spearfishing is on the agenda for many divers, but photographers will find loads of tropicals, such as Queen Angels, squirrelfish, Yellow and Blue Tangs, damselfish, Blue

Chromis, Arrow Crabs, bristleworms and colorful sponges. Visibility runs from 40 to well over 100 feet. Some extremely fast catamarans make day trips to the rigs, but most divers prefer the *C-Angel*, an 85-foot live-aboard that runs multi-day fishing and diving charters.



Missouri Bonne-Terre Mine

Before it closed in the 1930s, Bonne-Terre Mine was the U.S.'s largest lead mine for over 100 years. Today, this national historic site, about 40 miles

southwest of St. Louis, is flooded with over a billion gallons of water and touted as the “world’s largest freshwater dive resort.”

The topside (62°F) and water conditions are constant (58°F, no thermoclines or currents) year-round, with 100+ visibility. There is also very little silt and a very clean water supply (which is filtered through limestone)—the locals have used this mine for their drinking water.

Dives are arranged as “trails” (24 of them) and sequenced according to level of difficulty. Divers are taken in guided groups. Only the staff is allowed to use dive lights, but there is also an abundance of lights overhead. Points of interest include a steam locomotive in 85 feet of water, a cement building called “Time Keeper’s Shack,” staircases, elevator shafts, ore carts and track. Tanks are provided; power inflator BCs are required.

For information, visit www.2dive.com.



Montana Big Horn Canyon

To picture Big Horn Canyon National Recreation Area, imagine damming the Grand Canyon on a smaller scale. Now imagine the wall diving.

Access is mostly by boat from Fort Smith at the end of the dam. Boat rentals are available (but you’ll need to get air fills at Adventure Scuba in Billings). One of my favorites sites is Frozen Leg Bay, about 4 miles up, in a small canyon off the main lake. The walls



Nebraska Lake McConaughy

Lake McConaughy is composed of 105 miles of white sand beaches and 35,000 surface acres of water. Nearly everything about Lake McConaughy is big. It is Nebraska’s largest reservoir, and its dam, Kingsley Dam, is among the largest of its type in the world (3.5 miles long). Even its nickname, “Big Mac,” reflects the lake’s size, and resident fish grow to trophy proportions, and have resulted in several state records.

Lake McConaughy offers underwater exploration opportunities for scuba divers, as well as hosting one of

the largest open class, inland sailing regattas in the United States.

Visibility on the east end of the lake near the dam is best in late spring and early summer. Generally, visibility averages 15 to 20 feet, but can be as much as 35 to 40 feet in optimum conditions. Water temperatures are in the low 50s°F in late spring, and rise into the upper 60s°F by mid to late summer. The most popular dive sites are Diver’s Cove at the south end of the dam and Burma Bay. Spearfishing is also popular.

drop off to about 400 feet and have loads of ledges, submerged bushes and crevices for fish and creatures to hide out (watch for snagged fishing line). Divers will see Carp, Smallmouth Bass and an occasional trout, Ling or Walleye.

Visibility ranges from 10 to 50 feet. Water temperature varies from 70 to 80°F (in the summer, at the surface) to 50°F (below 40 feet).

—CAROLYN BAKKER

Nevada Lake Tahoe

Everything is massive underwater in Lake Tahoe—fields of imposing boulders and sheer walls. There is also a nice treat for big appetites—large numbers of tasty crayfish. The gin-clear water warms up to about 60°F during the summer, and in addition to filling your camp pot with crayfish, divers will also find countless trinkets dropped overboard by the lake's numerous boaters, which makes treasure hunting a must even if your dive is only one of curiosity.

Everything from jewelry to beer bottles to collectibles from the turn of the century have been found in Lake Tahoe. And, like many other mountain lakes, the scenery ain't half bad either.

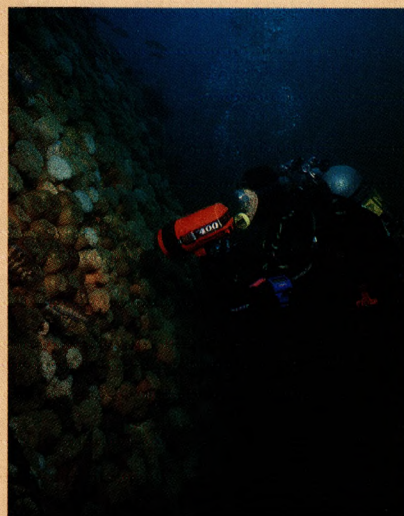


mer, and in addition to filling your camp pot with crayfish, divers will also find countless trinkets dropped overboard by the lake's numerous boaters, which makes treasure hunting a must even if your dive is only one of curiosity.

New Jersey Wreck of the Stolt Dagali

Only the stern section of the *Stolt Dagali* is to be found while swimming at a certain point 18 miles from Manasquan Inlet, New Jersey. The sinking was the result of a collision with the Israeli liner *Shalom* after both vessels met in a fog bank. The impact was so great that the *Stolt Dagali* was sheared into two pieces. The heavier stern section sank almost immediately, while the bow drifted and was later towed to New York and subsequently outfitted with another stern. The stern, however, has become a popular dive site in 130 feet of water with its highest point about 70 feet down. Leaning to the right, the high profile of the hull is covered with every imaginable encrusting organism found in New Jersey waters. The superstructure entices divers with a series of hatchways and holes, and extensive exploration can be done by

advanced divers experienced in overhead environments. The engine room is an especially nice treat. Outside the hull, keep an eye out for lobsters. Bug hunting is best in the area where the hull meets the sand, but also good in the surrounding debris field. —BY PETE NAWROCKY



New Hampshire Isles of Shoals

These islands eight miles off Portsmouth, NH, have been star-crossed since the first European spotted them. The Pilgrim's Captain John Smith thought he was in Virginia when he passed. Home to pirates (and rumored buried treasure), Shoalers took the wrong side during the War of 1812 and once moved *en masse* from one Isle to another to avoid taxes.

One of New England's premier seal dives is on Duck Island, which is one of the smallest of the nine that make up the Isles of Shoals.

The largest, Appledore and Star, are home to a marine laboratory and a historic resort hotel respectively.

Blessed with remarkable variety, the rocky islands are visited by divers from Massachusetts, New Hampshire and Maine. Walls drop vertically from the surface to 80 feet. Shallow channels and crevasses between the Islands host a variety of life, but most divers come to see the colony of Harbor Seals that summers here.

Many divers enter the shallow water off Duck Island in the hopes that the seals will choose to come out and play. And often, they do. —DAVE MILLHOUSER



New Mexico Blue Hole

This popular site, occasionally referred to as "Nature's Jewel," is a spring-fed, bell-shaped pool. A year-round average temperature of 61°F and remarkable visibility of 50 to 100 feet make this spot a favorite for divers from New Mexico and West Texas.

The pool is 66 feet wide and 82 feet deep. Over 3,000 gallons of water filter through from the spring per minute, keeping the water crystal clear. The claim has been made that when looking down from the surface, you can distinguish a bottle cap from a coin on the bottom. In regards to fishlife, expect to see about 50 goldfish, Carp and lots of crawfish. Night diving is also a possibility.

The best time to visit is during the week, when it's not as crowded and clarity is at its best. Stairs and a concrete platform over the water allow giant stride entry, and there are restrooms and changing rooms on-site. A \$10 permit (which can be purchased at the local police station) is required to dive, and is good for one full year. Note: If diving with an instructor, you do not need a permit.

New York Passenger Liner Oregon

The wreck of the steamship *Oregon* is approximately 15 miles south-southwest of Moriches Inlet off of Long Island, NY. This finely appointed passenger ship sank in 1886, when she collided with a schooner.

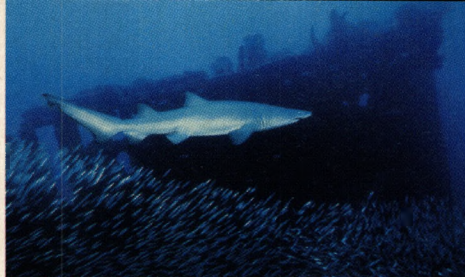


North Carolina

Wreck of the *Caribsea*

The *Caribsea* is just one ★ of nearly a ba-jillion wrecks scattered along the mid-Atlantic

coast. Like so many of its fallen sisters, she was a casualty of war. In 1942, this cargo ship, bound to Virginia from Cuba, was struck by two torpedoes delivered by the *U-158*. Today she rests in about 90 feet of water and is a popular viewing area for large schools of baitfish, spadefish, amberjack and the overly-developed smile of the Sand Tiger shark. Though fierce looking, these relatively docile sharks are great photo subjects, and the boilers, anchors and crumbling deck material of the *Caribsea* make the perfect backdrop.



North Dakota

Lake Sakakawea Tail Race

The Lake Sakakawea Tail Race is basically a unique "drift dive." Water charges



out the reservoir and through turbans used to generate electricity; as it exits the tunnel system, the water flows at a speed of 6 to 8 miles per hour into a man-made riverbed, then on into the river. The Tail Race is what links the two. Divers can hop in and go with the flow, over a rocky bottom, with a viz of 12 to 15 feet. In April to October, the water temp is approximately 73°F (the water is warmed by the turbans). The depth of the dive is in the 20 foot range. The strong current churns up the bottom, exposing artifacts and buffalo bones along the way.



Ohio Gilboa Quarry

Go almost anywhere in the Caribbean and you're likely to see an angelfish or a moray eel. But where can you go to see, say a Paddlefish? Try the Gilboa Quarry in northwest Ohio. There you can sneak up on a 5-footer. These toothless filter feeders were once prized throughout much of North America for their meat and caviar, but now thrive in only a few locations. They have a bill that accounts for about one-third of their body length, although biologists aren't sure of its function. Paddlefish can usually be found swimming near the surface, taking in zooplankton. As for the rest of the quarry, there are a host of attractions. A Grumman airplane was added to the list of dive sites last summer that also includes several boats, vehicles and training platforms. Dive classes and air fills (including nitrox) are available on site. Campsites, bunk houses and bathrooms round out the list of amenities. The quarry is open 365 days a year and is a good site for advanced training, as it exceeds 120 feet of depth.

For more, visit www.divegilboa.com.



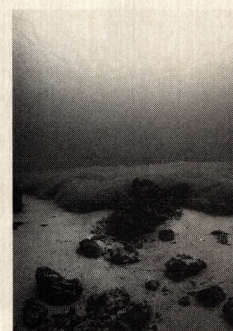
Oklahoma Tenkiller Lake

Lake Tenkiller, in Tenkiller State Park, ★ hosts a variety of dive options—shore access, gentle slopes, deep walls (up to 120 feet), four islands accessed only by boat, and an underwater terrain that includes ledges and trees. The lake was formed in the early 1950s, covering about 200 former homesites whose remains can still be found in depths of 12 to 70 feet.

The best time for diving is September to October, when visibility averages 28 to 30 feet, with temperatures in the low 70s°F at the surface, and 56 to 58°F below the thermocline. During the summer months, temperatures average 80°F at the surface, and 60°F at 60 feet. Visibility tends toward 12 to 20 feet.

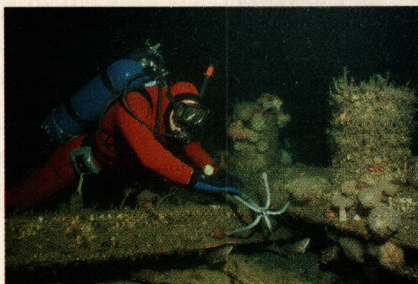
Oregon Clear Lake

Its name says it all. This lake has unbelievable visibility, as close to diving in air as you will find anywhere. And it's a good thing, because there's plenty to see, including a complete sunken forest that looks as if it was dropped intact, bird's nests and all, into the water. Algae fields cover the bottom like green meadows, offering incredible photographic opportunities. There are also strange geothermal vents that emit a milky substance, as well as some ancient lava flows. But, be warned, the water at this 4,000 foot dive is extremely cold. The deepest part of the lake is only 45 feet, so you will be able to enjoy this chilly dive for as long as you can stand it.



She now rests at a maximum depth of 130 feet.

At a length of 520 feet, the *Oregon* provides a large dive site filled with endless exploration opportunities. Her massive engine and nine boilers rise up nearly 60 feet from



the sandy bottom, providing a perfect reference point while diving, as does her giant steering quadrant in the stern.

Although this site can be dived year-round, summer usually provides the calmest seas and most pleasant conditions.

Visibility can vary greatly, however, 30 feet is considered average.

The *Oregon* continues to yield a host of beautiful artifacts from ship's hardware to passengers' personal effects for souvenir-seeking divers. Marine life on the wreck is equally prolific, with schools of fish and incredible invertebrates, including sponges, anemones, sea stars and lobster. —BRIAN SKERRY



Pennsylvania Dutch Springs

Situated in the picturesque Lehigh valley of Pennsylvania, Dutch Springs is only a one-hour drive from New York City. The land is rich in limestone and was purchased by the National Portland



Cement Co. in the 1930s. As the company quarried deeper and deeper, the location began to flood. Large pumps kept the site open for many years, but after all the commercially viable material had been extracted, the pumps were shut down and the 47-acre quarry sold. Renamed Dutch Springs, it is now under the stewardship of Stu Schooley, who is responsible for adding many diving attractions. The highlights

include a plane, helicopter, fire engine and trolley. A stocking program has added trout, large mouth bass, Bluegill, Koi (a type of goldfish) and crayfish to the list of marine life. Also, structures left from the original quarry operation still remain to explore. Water temperatures can vary from the 70s°F in the summer to the low 40s°F in the spring. Visibility can reach more than 40 feet, but is affected by algae blooms which occur during warmer weather. Depths of 100 feet are possible, but most of the best diving is found in shallower water. New divers find the location a great way to get the season started; the absence of waves, currents and the leisurely pace are a great combination.

—PETE NAWROCKY

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Rhode Island

The U-853

The last German U-boat sunk during World War II, *U-853* sits upright in 130 feet of water, miles east of Block Island, RI.

A monument to macho, she torpedoed the collier *Black Point* the day after a cease-fire had been declared. Her young captain may not have known, but should have suspected that the war was over.

In return, *U-853* was depth-charged for 26 hours by at least three



American ships. The action was close to one of the largest American naval bases, and everyone wanted to get into the act. None of the 55 crew survived. Skeletal remains can still be seen inside the sub, which is now a war grave.

The pressure hull remains largely intact, but there are several holes large enough for experienced divers to penetrate. It is possible to dive the submarine and her last victim on the same day. —DAVE MILLHOUSER

South Carolina Cooper River

One of the richest marine fossil beds in the world, the Cooper River is a magnet for divers fascinated by giant fossilized shark teeth. The granddaddy find is a piece of denture wear from *Carcharocles megalodon*, one of the largest sharks to ever swim the earth at 50 feet in length. Megalodon teeth can range from 3 to 6 inches in length. Of course, plenty of other fossilized



goodies await divers that brave the Braille-like conditions of Cooper River. Bring a big light plus a smaller backup. Water temps can get chilly, so pack a 5 mm with a hood (drysuits are good, too).

For more info, call Capt. Tom at (843) 406-2850 or visit www.cooperriver.com.

South Dakota Pactola Lake

Pactola Lake is on U.S. 385, 11 miles north of Hill City. Beneath the lake is the town of Pactola, which was first settled in 1875. For a brief period, it was referred to as Camp Crook, after a general who made his headquarters there while chasing out gold hungry miners when the land still belonged to the Sioux. But by early 1877, as many as 300 miners had moved in. For many years the town was served by railroad and well-known as both a mining town and a resort.

By 1956, a dam was built in Rapid City, which resulted in Pactola Lake, famous for its clear water—most days visibility in the lake is 20 to 25 feet, but can reach 40 feet. Divers can explore the reservoir's rock formations, as well as remains of Pactola City (foundations, outhouse, a car). There's also a railroad and highway asphalt. Summer temps range 63 to

73°F at surface, 40 to 45°F at depth, and viz is generally 10 to 30 feet. Winter

temps range 50 to 60°F, with ice diving and a viz of 20 to 30 feet.



Tennessee Dale Hollow Lake

In the Highland Rim section of northern Tennessee and southern Kentucky, Dale Hollow Lake is the most popular dive for Tennessee's divers. The late fall months offer a good 20 to 25 feet of visibility, along with warm waters in the mid-70s to low 80s°F. Divers can explore the old schoolhouse foundation of the town of Willowgrove, along with other submerged town remnants and cellars that have become habitats for Largemouth Bass and Bluegill. Spearfishing for catfish is a favorite pastime during the evening hours in the month of May.

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Texas The Flower Gardens

These underwater spectacles were first spotted by turn-of-the-century fisher-



men who could actually see the corals and sponges 50 to 100 feet below the surface. They likened the reefs to beds of flowers, hence the name Flower Gardens.

About 105 miles directly south of the Texas/Louisiana



border, the Flower Gardens are the northernmost coral reefs in the United States. It's estimated that this coral reef communi-

ty began developing 10,000 to 15,000 years ago, on top of two salt domes on the sea floor. Now, the corals form the basis for a complex ecosystem that gained government protection when designated the Flower Garden Banks National Marine Sanctuary in 1992.

In addition to the massive reefs composed of several different species of coral, divers can encounter over 200 species of Caribbean fish, Manta Rays, turtles and sharks (even an occasional Whale Shark during the summer months). And each year, on the eighth day after an August full moon, a mass coral spawning occurs, creating a snowstorm-like atmosphere in the surrounding waters.

Because of the remote location, most trips to the Flower Gardens are two-day live-aboard trips over a weekend. The summer months present the best diving conditions: temperatures of 80 to 85°F, with a remarkable visibility of 80 to 100 feet. If the weather permits, during the months of January through March, divers might be lucky enough to go out on a "Hammerhead trip." But during this time, the currents are also stronger, water temperature cooler (65 to 70°F) and visibility lower (50 to 80 feet).

PHOTOS: (TX) JESSE CANCELMO, OPPOSITE PAGE: (UT) TY SAWYER

Utah Homestead Crater

Diving Homestead Crater in Midway, UT, should be a must on any diver's wish list, if only because of the unique experience. The Crater is a 60-foot-deep geothermal pool in a beehive shaped dome with an opening to the sky. The 90 to 96°F, ever-so-slightly carbonated water is almost too good to be true, like taking a spa treatment. The silty bottom bubbles and gurgles in little primordial pools. The owners, the Simons, have found countless coins, guns and other artifacts deposited by the settlers as they passed through the area. They've also suspended an old wagon wheel and a buoyancy course in the water, as well as put in a platform and hang bar at 20 feet, for the countless divers who get certified here.

It's accessed via a 100-foot tunnel dynamited into the base of the crater; there is a dive shop, complete with Atomic rental regs. —T. S.

For more information, visit the Homestead Resort (home of the Crater; www.homesteadresort.com).

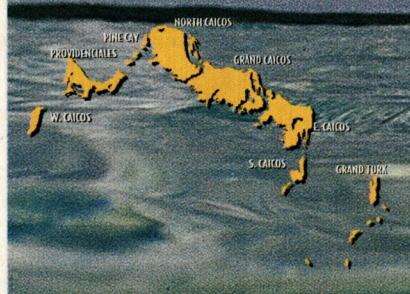


Vermont The General Butler

The *General Butler*, an 88-foot-long lake vessel, is in 40 feet of water at the south end of the Burlington Breakwater. A rare example of sailing canal boats, the schooner-rigged *Butler* was designed to sail on the lake, but with masts removed and centerboard raised, it could also traverse the Champlain Canal, which connected the lake to the Hudson Bay. A victim of a winter gale in 1876, the ship's masts and rigging were removed, but a cargo of marble blocks is intact. Divers can see a jury rigged, emergency tiller bar chained to the steering gear. —ELLSWORTH BOYD

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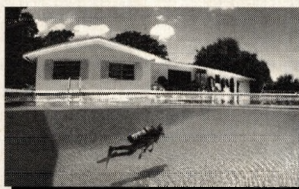
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Virginia Lake Rawlings

South of Richmond, peel off I-85 on exit 39 and take a dip in Lake Rawlings. This 20-acre quarry turned scuba park has a granite rock bottom that keeps visibility at 30 to 50 feet. Divers can fin in and around a



school bus, cabin cruiser, shrimp boat and a sailboat hull scraped by none other than movie hunk Keanu "like, Bra" Reeves. (From the *Replacements*.) Of course, practical divers will appreciate LR's training platforms, campsites, electrical hook-ups and full dive shop. The lake is also loaded with bass, Bluegill and Bream. But, dude, no like, spearfishing, 'kay?

Washington Keystone Jetty, Whidbey Island

The 250-foot-long jetty is comprised of large boulders piled perpendicular to shore to protect the Keystone-Port Townsend ferry terminal. The bottom and boulders slope down to nearly 60 feet at the end of the jetty, and it is here that you are most likely to find Giant Pacific Octopus tucked into one of the many cracks and crevices. Other highlights include a small kelp bed in the shallows, huge beds of fluffy Plumose Anemones, nudibranchs, crabs, Ling Cod, sculpins, Warbonnets, Wolf Eels and assorted invertebrates that color the boulders. The best dives are done on slack tide. Close to shore, the current can be manageable, but as you approach the halfway point on the jetty it had better be slack water or you are in for a work out.

— DAVID FLEETHAM

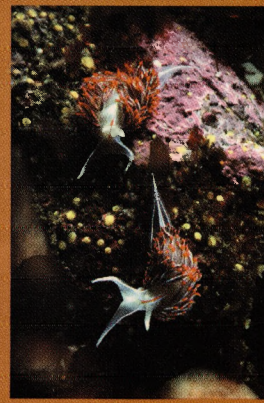


PHOTO: (VA) DAVID BOWMAN; (WA) DAVID FLEETHAM. OPPOSITE PAGE: PHOTO: (WI) PETE TOMASINO; (WY) CAROLYN BAKKER

West Virginia Mt. Storm Lake

Near the tiny town of Mt. Storm, WV, about 60 miles west of Winchester, VI, on U.S. Route 50, is a warm water haven known as Mt. Storm Lake. A cooling lake for a coal-burning power plant, it offers divers a toasty alternative to the mid-Atlantic coast. The lake sits at 3,200 feet and reaches a depth of 128 feet. Divers from as far away as Pittsburgh and Baltimore make the trek south to dive in water that, depending on plant activities, can reach 90°F. (Think diving in a 3 mm while there's snow on the ground.) Underwater scenery is scarce, but visibility runs 15 to 40 feet. Although the one-time weekend dive shop is now closed, divers can be found gearing up on shore more Saturdays than not.



Wyoming Firehole River

At the river's edge, contemplating your entrance, the water rushes past through a narrow canyon. It's a spectacular setting in a beautiful national park. The trick to this dive is to work your way into the channel and into the main flow. Once in, the water begins to move you toward the first of two holes.



The first hole is deep and still, while the second hole is larger and shallower.

Trout school in the area and watch the divers drift past with curiosity. And, swimmers leave behind a trail of goodies that have fallen from their pockets. The river is fed by the geothermally-heated water, which takes the chill off. It's best to dive in late summer and fall, after the spring runoff, with an experienced guide. —CAROLYN BAKKER

For more information on these and other dives within the 50 states, visit www.scubayellowpages.com or contact your local dive shop.

Wisconsin Prins Willem V

Affectionately called the "Willy," the *Prins Willem V*, which lies in about 95 feet of water, three miles off the coast of Milwaukee, is one of Lake Michigan's most popular wrecks. This intact 258-foot Dutch freighter sank on October 13, 1954 and now lies on her side in 90 feet of generally clear (35 feet of viz), but cold water. The interior is completely accessible, but should only be accessed



by wreck penetration trained divers. If you're a diver in this part of the country, you dive wrecks. And, this is a great one.



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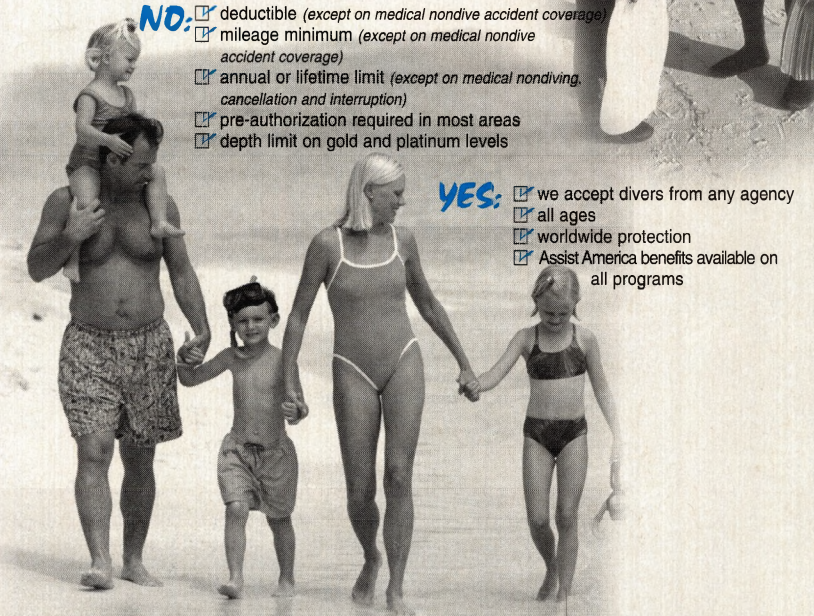
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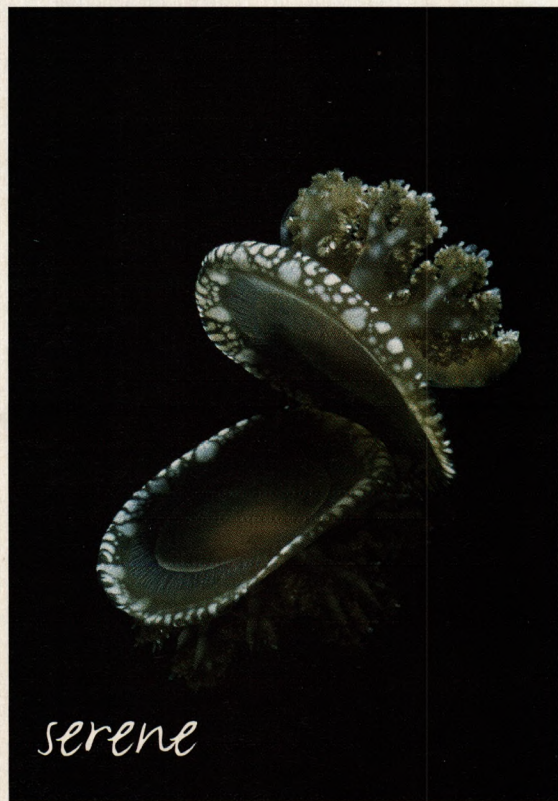
Flamboyant Wall, with its bright colors, evokes a cheerful mood.



humorous

A gaudy hat of Southern Stingrays at Stingray City. Below: A creature uniquely of the sea—here two *Cassiopia* interact in a peaceful dance.

The Many Moods of Cayman



serene

The Cayman Islands have attracted divers since man first peered beneath the sea. And for good reason—there's more to see and experience than you could in a lifetime of diving. That's why renowned underwater photographer and photo instructor Cathy Church has lived on Grand Cayman for nearly 30 years. During that time, she has experienced Cayman in its many moods—cheerful, chaotic, serene, playful, mysterious and curious—and sought out ways to express her own moods through her photography. For her, the creatures of the reef are family, the reefs themselves as familiar as her backyard, the warm waters as welcoming as an old friend. Her photography deftly exposes an insight and understanding of the Cayman Islands that is matchless.

A PHOTO ESSAY BY CATHY CHURCH

chaotic



**A crowded corner at Stingray City.
Below: A time for reflection.**

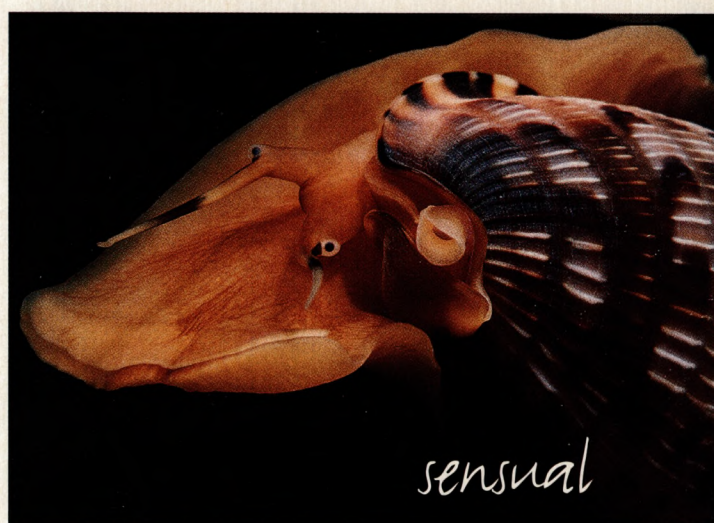
There are so many different moods underwater in the Cayman Islands that diving here can satisfy almost every desire. You can swim with inquisitive fish, explore the sand flats for rays, drift over a thousand-foot drop-off looking for sharks, meditate in a sunlit grotto or just lounge around a coral reef among fields of bright sponges.

I often prefer a familiar reef where I know my way around. I can relax more and by experiencing the feeling of the site, my creativity flows more freely. I am easy to please—I love to photograph virtually everything I see underwater. I am intrigued by the challenge of capturing the essence of the simplest algae or the most common fish. My black-and-white eye may see a pattern in the sand or a gorgonian silhouette. With difficult subjects like shrimp and fish, it is especially important to find a great background, a good lighting angle—something that evokes an emotion in a viewer.

cayman



meditative



Left to right: Barracuda love to check out divers; the sensual movements and shape of a Reticulated Helmet Cowrie.



Sometimes I reverse the process by starting with a feeling such as serenity, mystery, fantasy or joy, and attempt to assemble an image that evokes that emotion. I visualize a familiar dive site that might provide an image to work with, then head for the water.

Sometimes, the biologist in me surfaces, and I just want to explore any dive site I can get to, looking for something odd or fun. I may be attracted to the delicacy of a tiny hydroid standing firmly on the tip of a yellow boring sponge surrounded by green sea mat tunicate.

I have spent many serene hours in Devil's Grotto over the 30 years that I have been diving here. Sometimes I just kneel on the bottom and watch the play of the light. When a huge swarm of minnows fills the grotto, the feeling is pure magic. They flow in an ever-changing kaleidoscope of forms. I have captured the moods of the Grotto on slide, color negative, digital and black-and-white films. Each style thrills me in an entirely different way.

In an adventurous mood, I head for the North Wall and try to get close to those

Left: A pair of French Angelfish take refuge in a sponge-filled crevice.

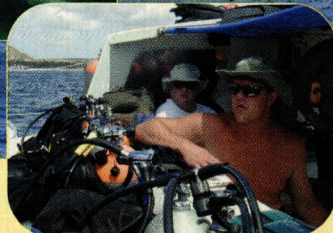
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elusive Spotted Eagle Rays. One has yet to glide up to my lens and turn to give me just the right angle on its wings, so I cannot yet show you a fabulous Spotted Eagle Ray! Often a shark or two patrols in the distance. But I am more likely found facing the wall looking for critters, shapes and compositions for black and white, or bright colors that elicit that true touch of emotion or the electric thrill of a moment. And when the mood is right, I lift my eye to the viewfinder, knowing that the Cayman Islands have surprised me once again. 🐟

Skin Diver GUIDE the cayman islands

GETTING THERE: Cayman Airways offers daily flights from Miami to Grand Cayman, and non-stop flight service from Houston, Tampa and Cayman Brac. Island Air offers numerous daily flights from Grand Cayman to her sister islands of Cayman Brac and Little Cayman. *Cayman Airways* (800) 422-9626 www.caymanairways.com
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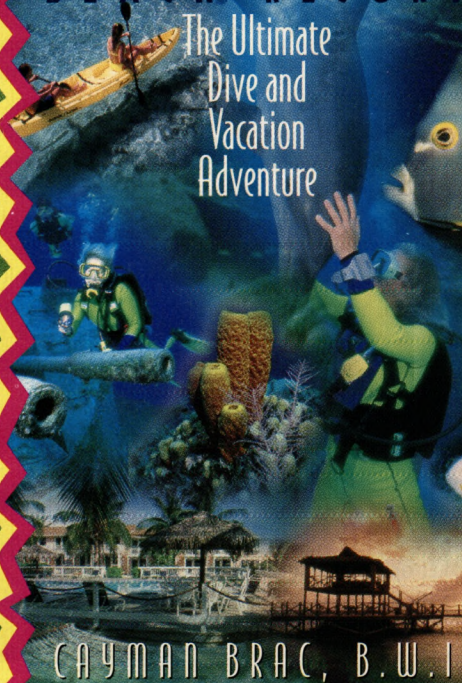
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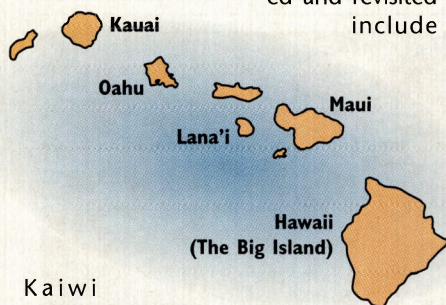


Hawaii's Signature Dive Sites

TEXT BY RYAN ALLEN
PHOTOGRAPHY
BY JAMES D. WATT

These *signature* dive sites are the epitome of Hawaiian diving. Whether it's the first visit or the fiftieth, frequent divers and new divers alike flock to the warm, clear waters of these landmark sites because they never fail to thrill and surprise.

The Big Island's Kona Coast The dive sites off the Kona Coast are lined up one after another. The Big Island's massive mountains provide a sheltered lee, resulting in clear water and easy currents. Spots most often recommended and revisited include



Kaiwi Point, Three-Run Cave and a Manta Ray night dive. The underwater terrain also offers an abundance of lava tubes for divers to explore, and a variety of marine creatures to mingle with—schooling fish, huge moray eels, Spanish Dancers, Hawaiian Sea Turtles and Manta Rays that aren't too shy to glide right up to you.

Maui's Molokini Crater This submerged volcanic crater, with a crescent-shaped rim that rises 160 feet above the surface of the water, is a nature preserve and provides ample opportunities for both scuba and snorkeling. Divers can delight in viz that frequently exceeds 100 feet and reefs crowded with a wide

array of friendly fish and marine life (450 species, 25 percent of which are endemic to Hawaii, some found only off Molokini), all amongst a varied terrain of walls, reefs and ledges. Also offered are night dives that will spoil a diver for life, and, weather permitting, Molokini's more challenging backside.

Lana'i's Cathedrals The reverent First and Second Cathedrals are what have divers and fish flocking to Lana'i. These huge caverns remain from the island's volcanic formation. At First Cathedral, light enters the cave through a lattice work of openings in the wall. And, at the center of the floor, a large, alter-like rock inspires the site's name.

Second Cathedral also features a hollowed-out interior, with walls loaded with crustaceans and invertebrates, and a ceiling lined with Orange Cup Corals. The Second Cathedral is also home to a Whitemouth Moray Eel named Elwood, who often approaches divers for a hand-out. A number of tubes offshoot the cavern, adding to the scenery.

Oahu's Mahi The *Mahi* is a 176-foot Navy minesweeper that was

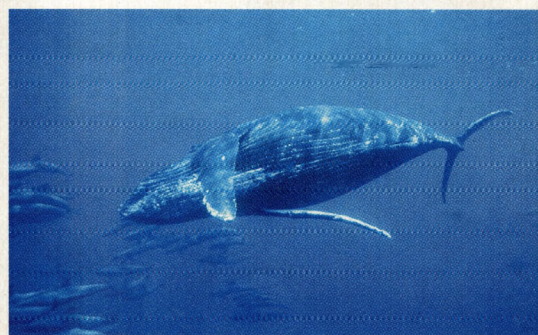
at around 65 feet. Visibility often exceeds 100 feet, and the wreck itself is coral encrusted and home to a wide variety of reef fish. Many holes and hatchways in the wreck make for safe, easy penetration, and a group of four Spotted Eagle Rays are sometimes spotted swimming over the sand around the wreck.

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A signature sighting is of the Humpback Whales during migration.

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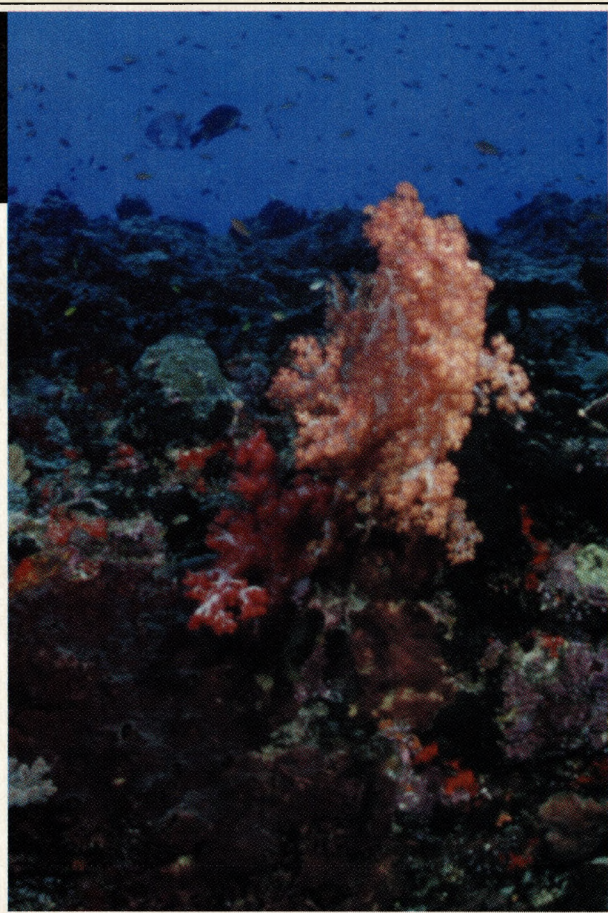
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JUST HOW FRESH IS THIS WATER? I MUSED TO MYSELF, because I was considering drinking it. Nearing three hours underwater, my mouth was very dry. I wished I'd planned better, because I knew, as do most divers, that diving dehydrates you in several ways and can contribute to decompression sickness, cramping and discomfort.



Drinking on the Job

BY KARL SHREEVES

The first way divers get dehydrated comes from the cooling effect of water. To save heat, your body reduces blood flow to your extremities, which act like radiators. Less blood in your arms and legs means more in your core, where the pooling triggers your kidneys to unload the "excess" water.

Your breathing gases comprise the second dehydra-

tor. Since water creates maintenance problems for cylinders and machinery, breathing gas compressors and systems remove most of the moisture from a gas. The result is that scuba air, enriched air nitrox or trimix has about as much water in it as a Sahara sandstorm on a dry day. Since it's so dry, each breath you take picks up moisture from your lungs, so that you lose a little bit of water every time you exhale.

You can also lose a lot of water before a dive, which is a third dehydrator. If you sweat a lot prior to a dive, obviously your body's giving up water. In tek diving, this can be major because you need more exposure protection due to dive duration. Donning an exposure suit in a hot climate—the worse, a drysuit in a hot dry climate—will extract substantial water from your sweat glands if there's more than a slight delay before getting wet. This is an issue when tek diving in California, the Red Sea, Missouri—any place with hot air and cool water. Heavy exercise in a hot climate before a dive can also contribute to water loss. On one cave diving expedition in

Gulp, gulp, gulp...ahhhh. Treat your body to a tall drink of water both before and after every dive.



PHOTO: MICHELLE VAN VLIET

Drink before the dive—right up to the last minute. If you're a tek diver, a water bottle should be part of your gear. The hotter the climate and the more you sweat pre-dive, the more you should be chugging away.

TOTAL Finally, your diving lifestyle affects your hydration. Most people tend not to drink enough non-caffeinated, non-alcoholic fluids to begin with. Add caffeine, which tends to make you urinate (it's a mild diuretic), and alcohol the night before if you're in "vacation mode," and you're behind the hydration curve before your diving day even starts.

In recreational diving, if you make a realistic effort to stay hydrated before, between and after diving, dehydration during the dive isn't typically a big issue. Not so with the long decompression common to tek diving, and a greater chance of starting the dive dehydrated. Here are five ways to keep dehydration at bay:

2 Drink water. Clearly you want to minimize caffeine (a cup of coffee's probably no big deal, but don't have six). Fruit juices, sports drinks, etc., have nice flavor, but the body absorbs plain water faster than anything else.

4 Drink during the dive. Unless local water experts confirm its safety, I wouldn't count on drinking the water you're diving in.

Drinking underwater isn't hard, but it's not exactly a skill for the beginning diver. Your technique needs to keep the surrounding water from contaminating your drinking water. The easiest is to drink from something that collapses completely as you consume the water, like a camel back pouch.

Drinking underwater isn't hard, but it's not exactly a skill for the beginning diver. Your technique needs to keep the surrounding water from contaminating your drinking water.

By the way, eating while diving is probably better to avoid. If you choke on a liquid, you can put back your regulator and cough it clear as needed. If you choke on food, you can't cough it into a regulator, and if you need a Heimlich maneuver, you're probably hosed. If you need calories, go for fruit juice or a protein shake rather than solid food.

Personally, I try to drink at least a quart before and between dives. 🐟

Karl Shreeves is VP, Technical Development for DSAT and PADI, and an avid tek diver.

The largest consumer diving event in North America, Beneath the Sea will be held in Secaucus, NJ, March 22 to 24, 2002. There will be 300 exhibitors from all corners of the world, more than 60 seminars by specialists and industry experts, social events, workshops and more. Stan Waterman, world-renowned videographer, will host the Saturday Night Film Festival. The WDHOFF will also host some events.

For more information, call (914) 664-4310, e-mail info@beneaththesea.org or visit www.beneaththesea.org.

The Cleveland Lakefront State Park, Dive Rescue and Evidence Recovery agency will be hosting a "Rapid Deployment Search and Rescue/Recovery" course April 2 to 5, 2002. Designed for dive team members and tenders as well as public safety officials in law enforcement, fire and EMS agencies, the course, held in the open water environment, costs \$330/diver and \$130/tender.

For more information, contact Officer Kevin Erskine, Harbor Seals Dive Rescue Team, Cleveland Lakefront State Park at (216) 881-8141, ext. 3024.

One of this country's oldest and most prestigious dive clubs, the Boston Sea Rovers have announced that their 48th Annual Underwater Clinic is set for March 2 and 3, 2002, at the Fairmont Copley Plaza Hotel, Boston, MA. The two-day show upholds their time-honored tradition to "Raise the Level of Knowledge of the Underwater World." Features include 40 seminars covering every aspect of scuba diving and the marine environment, a dozen detailed workshops on advanced diving techniques, a world-class evening film festival, and with more than 60 booths, the largest display of dive equipment and services in New England for the year.

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21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30
31	32	33	34	35	36	37	38	39	40
41	42	43	44	45	46	47	48	49	50
51	52	53	54	55	56	57	58	59	60
61	62	63	64	65	66	67	68	69	70
71	72	73	74	75	76	77	78	79	80
81	82	83	84	85	86	87	88	89	90
91	92	93	94	95	96	97	98	99	100
101	102	103	104	105	106	107	108	109	110
111	112	113	114	115	116	117	118	119	120
121	122	123	124	125	126	127	128	129	130
131	132	133	134	135	136	137	138	139	140
141	142	143	144	145	146	147	148	149	150
151	152	153	154	155	156	157	158	159	160
161	162	163	164	165	166	167	168	169	170
171	172	173	174	175	176	177	178	179	180
181	182	183	184	185	186	187	188	189	190
191	192	193	194	195	196	197	198	199	200
201	202	203	204	205	206	207	208	209	210
211	212	213	214	215	216	217	218	219	220
221	222	223	224	225	226	227	228	229	230
231	232	233	234	235	236	237	238	239	240
241	242	243	244	245	246	247	248	249	250
251	252	253	254	255	256	257	258	259	260
261	262	263	264	265	266	267	268	269	270
271	272	273	274	275	276	277	278	279	280
281	282	283	284	285	286	287	288	289	290
291	292	293	294	295	296	297	298	299	300

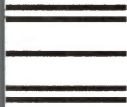
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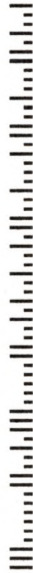
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ADVERTISERS INDEX

Reader Service No.	ADVERTISER	Page No.	Reader Service No.	ADVERTISER	Page No.	Reader Service No.	ADVERTISER	Page No.
ACCESSORIES/MISCELLANEOUS			86	LAND SHARK DIVERS RESORT.....		170	PRINCETON TECHNOLOGIES	96
81	D.A.N. DIVER'S ALERT			NASSAU UNDERSEA ADVENTURES.....	5	135	SCUBARADIO	101
	NETWORK.....	19	80	LITTLE CAYMAN BEACH RESORT	81	130	SILENT WORLD	101
60	NISSAN	Cover 2	84	MALAYSIA AIRLINES	59	121	SKIN DIVER GEAR	94
180	PADI	16	56	MAUI DIVE SHOP	30	94	TRIMARINE BOAT COMPANY	101
95	ROLEX	Cover 4	91	MIKE BALL DIVE EXPEDITIONS	11		ULTRALIGHT CONTROL.....	98
166	VICENCIA & BUCKLEY	75	86	NEAL WATSON'S UNDERSEAS ADVENTURES	4-5	163	UNDERWATER PHOTO TECH	101
COOPERATIVE ADVERTISERS			155	PETER HUGHES DIVING	13	SCUBA EQUIPMENT		
98	BAHAMAS	25	181	PLAZA RESORT BONAIRE	11	93	AQUACOLOR	40
70	BARBADOS	42	106	ROATAN CHARTERS	43	193	IDEATIONS	74
107	BELIZE	71	86	SCUBA BIMINI DIVE CENTER	5	52	MAX AIR	37
63	COZUMEL	28	67	SOLMAR V.....	44	82	SEA VISION USA	58
50	FT LAUDERDALE	6-7	86	ST LUCIA UNDERSEA ADVENTURES	5	89	SUBMERSIBLE SYSTEMS	73
97	HAWAII.....	82-83		STUART COVE'S DIVE		TRAINING		
88	TURKS & CAICOS.....	73		SOUTH OCEAN.	Cover 3	105	DIVERS INSITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY....	3
DIVE TRAVEL			160	WINDJAMMER	90a	58	EASTERN ACADEMY OF	
71	AGGRESSOR LIMITED	17	86	WALKER'S CAY UNDERSEA			SCUBA EDUCATION	74
77	ANTHONY'S KEY RESORT	23, 27, 47		ADVENTURES	5	☎	HALL'S CAREER INSTITUTE.....	72
74	AQUA CAT	18	86	XANADU UNDERSEA		78	OCEAN CORP.....	42
86	AQUA DIVE UNDERSEA ADVENTURES	5		ADVENTURES	5	87	P.D.I.C.	72
66	AQUATICA.....	41	EVENTS			TRAVEL GUIDE		
98	BAHAMAS DIVING ASSOCIATION	25	55	ANTARTICA	38	112	AMERICAN PRO DIVING CENTER	85
53	BERMUDA DEPARTMENT OF		65	H ₂ O CAYMAN ISLANDS	43	148	AQUA DREAMS TRAVEL	85
	TOURISM	15	168	THE LOS CABO DIVE FIESTA	80	57	BILIKIKI CRUISES LTD.....	85
76	BLACKBEARD CRUISES.....	14	165	THE KONA CLASSIC UNDERWATER.....		141	BON VOYAGE TOURS	85
64	BOB SOTO'S	28		PHOTOGRAPHY & ART FESTIVAL	29	195	OCOTAL RESORT.....	85
90	BRAC REEF BEACH RESORT	81	68	ROATAN PHOTO COMPETITION	49	51	SEA SABAH	85
150	CAPTAIN SLATE'S ATLANTIS.....	70	MARKETPLACE			73	SMALL HOPE BAY LODGE	85
85	CARIBBEAN ADVENTURES	31	123	ARMATO'S.....	99	194	YOUNG ISLAND	85
54	CARIB INN.....	41	124	AQUACOLOR.....	95	U/W PHOTO/VIDEO		
151	COCO VIEW RESORT	48	136	BERGER BROS	98	109	JW FISHERS	70
59	EXPLORER VENTURES	31	127	B & H PHOTO	99			
83	FANTASY ISLAND.....	45	128	DIVE GODDESS	96			
9	JEAN-MICHEL COUSTEAU	30	133	MARINE CAMERA	101			

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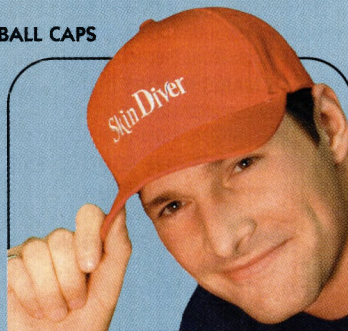
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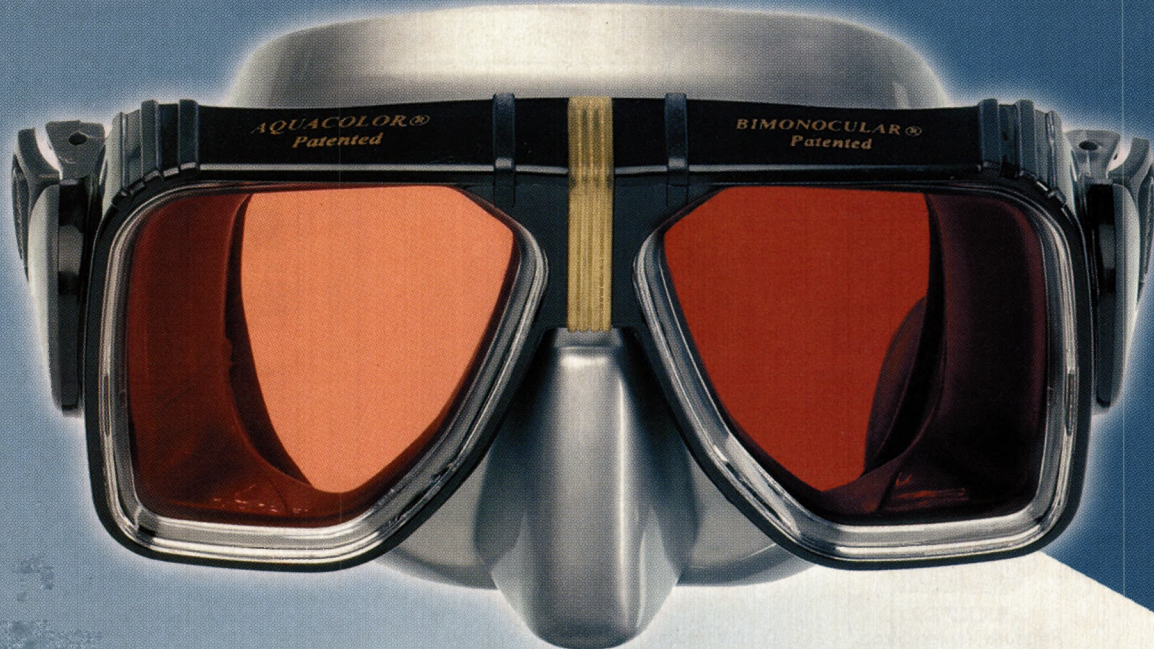


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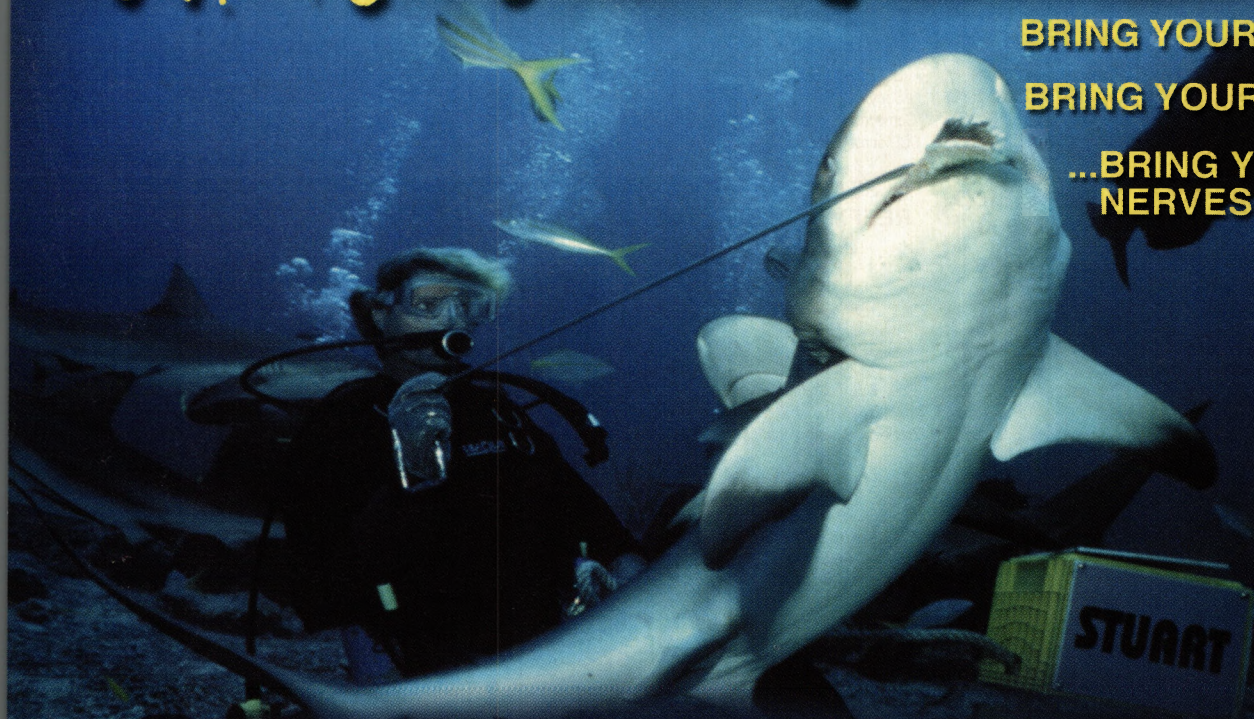
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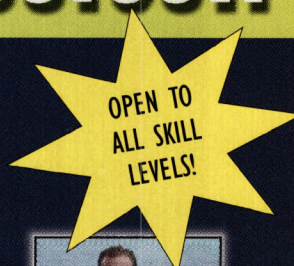
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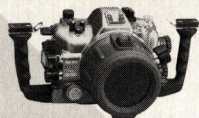
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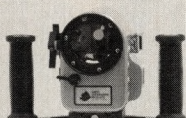
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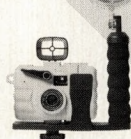
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Skin Diver's **Second Annual Cover Shot Contest**

GRAND PRIZE:

The winner's photo on the cover of the December 2002 issue of *Skin Diver* magazine!*

Katherine Smith dreamed of seeing her image on the cover of *Skin Diver*... Her dream came true...are you next?



To enter, submit each photograph with an entry fee of \$5 (check or money order). Multiple entries will be accepted. Each image submitted must be accompanied with an entry fee. Clearly mark each slide with location information, and with name and address. Vertical, 35 mm slides or medium format transparencies are preferred. DEADLINE FOR ENTRIES IS JULY 15, 2002. Send to: Skin Diver Cover Contest, Attn: Editor, 6420 Wilshire Blvd., Los Angeles, CA 90048-5515

Contest open to photographers of all levels. The editors of *Skin Diver* will select five finalist images. These images will be posted on *Skin Diver* Online by August 1, 2002, and *Skin Diver* readers will help select the winner. Runner-up photos will be featured in the December 2002 issue.

*For magazines mailed to subscribers only. Grand prize will include a first-time use payment of \$800. Each submission becomes property of *Skin Diver* magazine (photos will not be returned). *Skin Diver* is not responsible for lost or damaged submissions. Entries submitted without entry fee will be disqualified.

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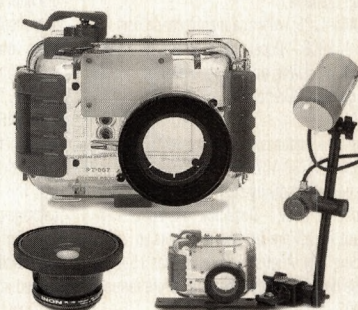
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For more information, visit www.skin-diver.com or www.padi.com.

American Pro Diving Center

Serving: Crystal River, FL
(800) 291-3483
www.americanprodiving.com
February 1, 2002 – June 30, 2002: Manatee Snorkel and Dive Tour with one night stay at our waterfront view villas \$59.50 per person, dbl occupancy, Sunday through Thursday.

Amigos Del Mar

Serving: Cabo San Lucas
(501) 26-2706, www.amigosdive.com
November 15, 2001 – May 31, 2002: 10% off diving local and atolls.

Anchor Scuba

Serving: Pompano Beach, FL
(800) 374-9792, www.anchorscuba.com
November 15, 2001 – June 1, 2002: Pay for 5 trips and receive 6th trip free. (1/2 day dive charters; 6 pack boat).

Aqua Dives Undersea Adventures

Serving: Belize
(800) 327-8150,
www.nealwatson.com/belize.html
November 15, 2001 – July 1, 2002: 10% discount on dive packages booked directly with Undersea Adventures.

Aqua Dreams Travel & Utila Dive Center

Serving: Multiple destinations
(888) 322-3483, www.aquadreams.com
January 1, 2002 – November 30, 2002: 10% discount (land and diving only, not including tax) for all 7-night dive packages at Utila Dive Center/Mango Inn. Package includes 7 nights accommodations in AC cabin, breakfast and dinner daily, round-trip airport transfers and 3 boat dives per day for 6 days. Includes tax and service charge: \$599 per person/dbl occupancy.

Aquanauts Grenada

Serving: Grenada
(473) 444-1126, www.aquanautgrenada.com
March 1, 2002 – December 15, 2002: 10% discount on all diving and courses booked directly with Aquanauts Grenada.

AquaMarine Diving

Serving: Bali, Indonesia
011 (62) 361-730-107
www.aquamarinediving.com
November 7, 2002 – December 14, 2002: 10% discount on all pre-booked packages in 2002. Excluding July, August and December 15 – 31. Must be booked and deposit sent before January 10, 2002.

Aqua Sport

Serving: Red Sea
011 (972) 8 633-4404, www.aqua-sport.com
November 15, 2001 – June 1, 2002: Free accommodation and 10% discount off all diving activities.

Art Pickering's Provo Turtle Divers

Serving: Turks & Caicos
(800) 833-1341, www.provoturtledivers.com
November 15, 2001 – June 30, 2002: 10% off all diving (excluding instruction).

Barefoot Adventures

Serving: St. Thomas, USVI
(800) 234-4936, www.barefootdivers.com
November 15, 2001 – June 1, 2002: 2-tank boat dives \$69.95, on Mondays and Tuesdays \$59.95.

Bay Adventures

Serving: Cozumel
(888) 599-3483, www.bayadventures.com
Valid for entire year of 2002: 10% discount on 7-night dive/hotel packages in Cozumel.

Bega Divers

Serving: Fiji
(679) 361-088, www.begadivers.com
November 15, 2001 – March 31, 2002: Multi-dive packages at top diving locations in Bega Lagoon using value-for-money rooms.

Blue Horizons Cottage Hotel

Serving: Grenada
(473) 444-4316, www.bluegrenada.com
March 1, 2002 – December 15, 2002: 25% discount on all accommodations for bookings made directly to hotel.

Blue Water Divers & Watersports

Serving: Bermuda
(441) 234-1034, www.divebermuda.com
January 15, 2002 – April 30, 2002: 2-tank dive package: \$60 per 2-tank dive if diving a minimum of two 2-tank dives; 50% off gear rental; Canadian Dollar deal (visitors only): 2-tank dive \$75 (Canadian Dollars), if diving a minimum of two 2-tank dives. Payment to be made in cash or travelers checks only. Must prove Canadian citizenship with passport and travel documentation. *These offers not valid with other specials.

Blue Waters Inn & Aqua Marine Dive

Serving: Tobago, Indonesia
(868) 660-4341, www.bluewatersinn.com
November 15, 2001 – December 15, 2002: 10% discount on all rooms based on availability; at the dive shop: pay for 8 dives get 10 dives. *Offer not valid with other specials.

Blue Water Divers

Serving: Turks & Caicos
(649) 946-2432, www.grandturkscuba.com
November 1, 2001 – May 30, 2002: 15% discount off hotel and dive package prices listed on website. This discount is only applicable to dive/hotel package prices and does not include any specials that run over the next 7 months. Also, 2 for 1 night and afternoon dives, and Gibbs Cay trips booked at time of booking package.

Bonaire Undersea Adventures

Serving: Bonaire
(800) 327-8150
www.nealwatson.com/bonaire.html
November 15, 2001 – July 1, 2002: 10% discount on dive packages booked directly with Undersea Adventures.

Bora Diving Center

Serving: Tahiti
011 (689) 67 71 84, www.boradive.com
November 15, 2001 – June 15, 2002: 15% discount offer on each dive and a free hat with Manta logo after 5 dives. Special packages include 3

nights plus transfers and 5 dives, with all diving equipment for \$283 per person (dbl occupancy in room Chez Nono, reservation required).

Borneo Divers & Sea Sports

Serving: Borneo
(011) 6088-222-226, www.jaring.my/bdivers
November 15, 2001 – March 31, 2002: 5 days, 4 nights diving at Sipadan Island at \$560 only Ex-Tawau. Accommodation, 3 meals a day, plus light snacks all day, 3 boat dives, unlimited shore dive, twin share beach hut, boat, tanks, weight and weight belt (valued at \$985).

BZ Travel Services

Serving: Multiple destinations
(281) 337-3758, www.bztravelservices.com
May 1, 2002 – November 15, 2002: All dive trips 10% discount with purchase of travel package.

Captain Slate's Atlantis Dive Center

Serving: Key Largo, FL
(800) 331-3483, www.captainslate.com
November 15, 2001 – June 1, 2002: 10% on all diving and items purchased at dive store (not hotel).

Castaway Island Fiji

Serving: Fiji
(800) 888-0120, www.castawayfiji.com
January 10, 2002 – March 31, 2002: Free meals with stays of 6 nights or more and unlimited dive package for \$225 with no maximum stay.

Crystal Cove at Sapphire Beach

Serving: USVI
(800) 524-2025, www.antillesresorts.com
November 15, 2001 – December 15, 2002: 4th and 7th night free, free airport pick-up.

Club St. Croix Beach Resort

Serving: USVI
(800) 524-2025, www.antillesresorts.com
November 15, 2001 – December 15, 2002: 4th and 7th night free, free airport pick-up.

Dive Discovery Travel

Serving: Multiple destinations
(800) 886-7321, e-mail: info@divediscovery.com
November 15, 2001 – June, 2002: 10% off land-based or live-aboard dive boats to South Pacific/S.E. Asia/Africa. Includes: International air.

Dive Dive Dive Dive

Serving: Nassau, Bahamas
(800) 368-3483, www.divedivedive.com
January 5, 2002 – June 5, 2002: 10% off dive packages with accommodations in villas.

Dive Key West

Serving: Key West, FL
(800) 426-0707, www.divekeywest.com
January 1, 2002 – September 1, 2002: Buy three, dive free. Dive pass offers 4 dive trips for the price of 3 per person.

The Dive Shop

Serving: Barbados
(888) 898-3483, www.divebds.com
February 1, 2002 – September 30, 2002: 10% discount on 6 and 10 dive packages boat dives.

Dive World

Serving: USVI
(340) 775-5971, www.diveworldvi.com
November 30, 2001 – August 31, 2002: \$100 dis-

count on private villa with 4 boat dives and unlimited diving at our Coral World Marine Park location, only \$559 per person, dbl occupancy.

Divi Tiara Beach Resort

Serving: Cayman Brac
(800) 367-3484, www.diviresorts.com
November 1, 2001 – April 14, 2002: Special pricing discount on 2-dive special. Package includes 2 meals daily, transfers, tax and service charges.

El Portillo Beach Resort

Serving: Dominican Republic
(800) 327-8150
www.nealwatson.com/samana.html
November 15, 2001 – July 1, 2002: 10% discount on dive packages booked directly with Undersea Adventures.

Exotic Caye Beach Resort

Serving: Belize
(800) 201-9389, www.belizeisfun.com
January 2, 2002 – November 15, 2002: 10% off 7-night stay.

Fantasea Divers/Ocean Rover Diving Cruises

Serving: Thailand, Myanmar, Indonesia
(66) 76 281 388, www.fantasea.net
November 15, 2001 – November 15, 2002: 20% discount on any Ocean Rover live-aboard cruise. Valid with direct bookings only.

Fortuna I & II Luxurious 5-Star Yachts

Serving: Egypt
(202) 738-2224, www.travco-eg.com
November 11, 2001 – October 31, 2002: 10% discount for group of 12.

International Diving

Serving: Multiple destinations
(800) 544-DIVE, www.love2dive.com
November 1, 2002 – June 30, 2002: 10% discount on any live-aboard boat.

Iti Diving International

Serving: Tahiti
(689) 57-77-93, www.itidiving.pf
April 1, 2002 – June 30, 2002: 10% discount on each single dive.

Jack's Diving Locker

Serving: Hawaii
(808) 329-7585, www.jacksdivinglocker.com
Now through February 28, 2002: 10% off merchandise or dives, not to be combined with other discounts.

The Junk

Serving: Thailand
(66) 76 342186, www.thejunk.com
Now through December 1, 2002: 10% discount on live-aboard, Chinese Sailing junk to Similan Islands and Richelieu Rock.

Kosrae Village Resort/Sleeping Lady Divers

Serving: Thailand
(691) 370-3483, www.kosraevillage.com
February 1, 2002 – August 1, 2002: 10% off accommodations, diving and receive complimentary breakfast.

Lahaina Divers

Serving: Maui
(800) 998-3483
November 15, 2001 – June 1, 2002: 15% discount on diving.

Land Fall Dive & Adventure Travel

Serving: Multiple destinations
(800) 525-3833, www.landfallproductions.com
Now through October 17, 2002: Round-trip airfare (LAX to Nadi), 7 nights aboard a luxury live-aboard, meals, diving: \$2,849 plus tax.

Larry Parker's Reef Divers

Serving: Belize
(501) 26-3134, www.reefdivers.com
December 1, 2001 – November 15, 2002: 20% discount on local diving.

Layang Layang Island Resort

Serving: Malaysia
(03) 216-22-980, www.layanglayang.com
February 1, 2002 – October 31, 2002: Receive 2 nights free of charge for every 6 paid nights. Includes diving, meals and accommodations
Lomalagi Resort

Serving: Fiji
(679) 816-098, www.lomalagi.com
January 15, 2002 – June 30, 2002: 10% discount on accommodations and all meals. Must mention this special.

Maduro Dive Fanta-Seas

Serving: Multiple destinations
(800) 327-6709, www.maduro.com
January 1, 2002 – September 30, 2002: \$25 discount per person on all 5-night or longer dive packages with low cost airfare to 23 countries.

Marlin Dive Centre

Serving: South Sulawesi, Indonesia
(62) 411-85-8762, www.marlindive.com
November 10, 2001 – November 10, 2002: 10% discount on live-aboard trips and on land-based dive packages.

Manta Dive Centre

Serving: Tobago
(868) 639-9969, www.mantadive.com
May 1, 2002 – December 15, 2002: Discount on pre-paid dive package, from 2 divers and up.

Maui Dive Shop

Serving: Maui
(800) 542-3483, www.maudiveshop.com
March 15, 2002 – December 1, 2002: 20% off of all scuba charters with the mention of this program.

Nassau Scuba Centre

Serving: Bahamas
(800) 327-8150
www.nealwatson.com/nassau.html
November 15, 2001 – July 1, 2002: 10% discount on dive packages booked directly with Undersea Adventures.

Nautilus Diving Bermuda

Serving: Bermuda
(441) 238-2332, www.bermuda.bm/nautilus
December 1, 2001 – March 31, 2002: 20% off dive package price, available upon request.

Negril Scuba Centre

Serving: Jamaica
(800) 818-2963
www.jamaicairie/negrilscubacentre.com
November 15, 2001 – June 1, 2002: 10% off all dive packages.

Nukubati Island

Serving: Fiji
(888) 345-4669, www.nukubati.com
March 1, 2002 – June 31, 2002: 10% discount on accommodations. Diving: 1 person pay and buddy dives for free.

Oasis Divers

Serving: Grand Turk
(800) 892-3995, www.oasisdivers.com
November 15, 2001 – December 1, 2002: 10% off hotel/dive packages booked directly with Oasis Divers, plus one free afternoon dive. Offer not available for wholesale bookings.

Ocean Concepts Scuba

Serving: Hawaii
(800) 808-3483, www.oceanconcepts.com
November 15, 2001 – July 1, 2002: 20% off standard rate for 2-tank, 2 location boat dives. Not valid with any other offer. Must reserve directly.

Ocean Divers

Serving: Key Largo, FL
(800) 451-1113, www.oceandivers.com
January 1, 2002 – June 30, 2002: 20% off regular single dive trip fee.

Ocean Point Hotel & Dive Service

Serving: Tobago
(866) 6-TOBAGO
www.oceanpoint.com/scubadiving
November 15, 2001 – June 1, 2002: 10% discount on room rates.

Ocean Promotion Scuba & Snorkel Adventures

Serving: Florida
(866) 728-2201
www.florida-adventure.com/oceanpromotion
February, 2002 – February, 2003: Discounts on diving/snorkel trips, beach hotel accommodations and Funky Fish Snorkel Camp for Kids.

Oyster Diving Cruises

Serving: Red Sea
(202) 33-60-244-255, www.oysterdiving.com
November 15, 2001 – May 1, 2002: 10% applied on cruise charges, including accommodations, meals, soft drinks and diving.

Pacific Island Club Saipan

Serving: Saipan and Guam
(670) 234-7976, www.pacificislandsclub.com
April 1, 2002 – July 19, 2002: 10% room discount for all reservations, must mention *Skin Diver*/PADI Bounty program.

Paradise Charters

Serving: Multiple destinations
(954) 524-8717, www.paradisearchters.com
January 3, 2002 – October 1, 2002: 10% on week-long live-aboard trip costing \$1,250 per person; 10% on 3-day weekend live-aboard trip costing \$600 per person.

Peter Hughes Diving

Serving: Grand Turk, Provo, Los Roques, Papua New Guinea, Palau and Bali
(800) 9-DANCER, www.peterhughes.com
November 15, 2001 – December 31, 2002: 20% off travel aboard Dancer Fleet vessels in locations listed above.

Proscuba Dive Centre

Serving: Tobago
(9868) 639-7424, www.diveguide.com/proscuba
February, 2002 – June 2002: 10 boat dives (including tank, air, weights) 5 days of a 2-tank (back to back). Seven nights accommodation at Surf Side Hotel. \$503 per person/dbl occupancy. Also receive for free with this package: airport transfers, refreshments on boat, lunch after diving, one night dive (valued at \$135).

Ra Divers Fiji

Serving: Fiji
(679) 694-511, www.radivers.com
November 15, 2001 – March 31, 2002: 15% off normal dive rates.

Reef & Rainforest

Serving: Multiple destinations
(800) 794-9767, www.reefrainforest.com
February 1, 2002 – December 31, 2002: 10% discount on 7 night or more live-aboard dive vessel.

Saba Rock Island Resort

Serving: BVI
(284) 495-9966, www.sabarock.com
November 15, 2001 – August 30, 2002: Special off-season rates to divers, stay 3 nights get 4th night free.

Sail Caribbean Divers

Serving: BVI
(936) 560-6794, www.sailcaribbeandivers.com

September 1, 2001 – December 31, 2001: 10% discount on any Sail Caribbean diver charter booked during these dates.

Sanvics Scuba

Serving: Grenada
(473) 444-4753, www.sanvics.com
November 15, 2001 – November 15, 2002: Receive 2 free dives or 1 day free Jeep rental with purchase of an Open Water Course, Advanced Course or a 10-dive package.

Scuba Bimini Dive Center

Serving: Bimini
(800) 327-8150
www.nealwatson.com/bimini.html
November 15, 2001 – July 1, 2002: 10% discount on dive packages booked directly with Undersea Adventures.

Scuba Junction

Serving: Thailand
(66) 77 456 164, www.scuba-junction.com
November 15, 2001 – June 1, 2002: 10% discount on all diving and course published prices.

Scuba Quest

Serving: Thailand
(66) 763-85143, www.scuba-quest.com
November 15, 2001 – November 15, 2002: 15% live-aboard cruises, 10% any diving course, free diving equipment upon completion of course for all further diving with us during your stay.

South East Asia Scuba Divers

Serving: Thailand
(66) 76 281-299, www.phuketdive.net
January 1, 2002 – December 31, 2002: 10% discount on live-aboard trips and on day diving trips.

Sea Fever Diving Cruises

Serving: Bahamas
(800) 443-3837, www.seafever.com
November 9, 2001 – December 31, 2002: 10% discount on Sea Fever sponsored trips, as advertised on website.

Seascape Inn

Serving: Andros, Bahamas
(242) 369-0342, www.seascapeinn.com
Now through June 1, 2002: 15% off 8-day/7-night/5 to 2-tank dive packages.

Siam Dive n' Sail

Serving: Thailand
(667) 633-0967, www.siamdivers.com
January 1, 2002 – May 1, 2002: 10% discount on all live-aboard diving.

Sipadan Dive Centre

Serving: Malaysia
(6088) 240-584, www.sipadandivers.com
November 30, 2001 – December 31, 2002: 10% off published price at \$120 per person/per night.

Southpoint Divers

Serving: Florida
(800) 891-DIVE, www.southpointdivers.com
May 1, 2002 – June 26, 2002 & September, 2002 – November 15, 2002: 10% off diving, does not include gear rental. Must present coupon. Must mention coupon at booking.

South Florida Diving Headquarters

(800) 771-3483
Serving: South Florida
www.southfloridadiving.com
November 15, 2002 – June 1, 2002: 10% off diving, snorkeling equipment rental and lodging.

St. George's Lodge

Serving: Belize
(800) 678-6871, www.gooddiving.com
December 1, 2001 – September 1, 2002: 10% discount on diving or non-diving packages, 3 night minimum.

St. Lucia Undersea Adventures

Serving: St. Lucia
(800) 327-8150

www.nealwatson.com/stlucia.html

November 15, 2001 – July 1, 2002: 10% discount on dive packages booked directly with Undersea Adventures.

Stockler Expeditions

Serving: Brazil
(800) 591-2955, e-mail: stocklers@usa.net
March 1, 2002 – June 15, 2002: \$300 discount on any dive vacation in Brazil, when booked through your local dive store. *Dive vacation includes air and land.

SunBreeze Hotel

Serving: Belize
(501) 26-2191, www.sunbreeze.net
December 1, 2001 – April 30, 2002: 10% off any rack rate packages offered by SunBreeze and booked directly with SunBreeze. Must mention this offer.

Sunset House

Serving: Grand Cayman
(877) 854-3227, www.sunsethouse.com/sd.html
April 1, 2002 – December 21, 2002: 10% off diving and accommodations, not valid with any other special.

Tobacco Caye Diving

Serving: Belize
(501) 14-9907, www.tobaccocayediving.com
January 1, 2002 – December 31, 2002: 10% off all packages booked online and a free bottle of rum or T-shirt if they mention *Skin Diver*.

Traders Ridge Resort

Serving: Yap, Micronesia
(877) 657-4695, www.tradersridge.com
November 7, 2001 – December 31, 2002: 10% discount on rooms.

Trip-N-Tour

Serving: Multiple destinations
(800) 348-0842, www.trip-n-tour.com
Now thru December, 2002: \$200 discount on any dive vacation when booked through local dive store. *Dive vacation includes air and land.

Underwater Safaris

Serving: BVI
(800) 537-7032, www.underwatersafaris.com
November 15, 2001 – June 1, 2002: 10% off all diving and training programs.

Vatulele Island Resort

Serving: Fiji
(800) 828-9146, www.vatulele.com
January 5, 2002 – March 31, 2002: Pay for 7 nights and receive 3 nights free.

Viva Undersea Adventures

Serving: Bahamas, Mexico, Dominican Republic
(800) 327-8150
www.nealwatson.com/vivadiving.html
November 15, 2001 – July 1, 2002: 10% discount on dive packages booked directly with Undersea Adventures.

Walkers Cay Undersea Adventures

Serving: Bahamas
(800) 327-8150
www.nealwatson.com/walkers.html
November 15, 2001 – July 1, 2002: 10% discount on dive packages booked directly with Undersea Adventures.

Windjammer Barefoot Cruises

Serving: Multiple destinations
(800) 672-6453, www.windjammer.com
April through mid-December, 2002: 15% discount on cruises only. When calling mention this discount to agent. *Excludes special sailings and other discounts.

Xanadu Undersea Adventures

Serving: Bahamas
(800) 327-8150
www.nealwatson.com/xanadu.html
November 15, 2001 – July 1, 2002: 10% discount on dive packages booked directly with Undersea Adventures. 

SO MANY PLANTS AND ANIMALS COEXIST on coral reefs that it's hard to tell where one ends and another begins. It's even more difficult when camouflage comes into play, as it often does underwater. Such is the case of the Golden Wentletrap (*Epitonium billeanum*), a tiny snail (less than .5 inches) that lives on colonies of yellow and orange cup corals. For years I didn't notice them, then one day I saw them, and now I see them constantly.

Wentletraps have beautifully whorled shells and take their name from an old Dutch word that means "winding staircase." They feed on corals and anemones, but often go unnoticed because of their small size and generally colorless appearance. The Golden Wentletrap, however, is bright yellow and matches the coral it feeds on.

With a specially designed feeding tube that stretches up to three times its body length, this little snail reaches deep into the soft tissue of the coral polyp where it feeds and absorbs a yellow pigment that makes it less visible to predators. It passes the pigment on to its eggs so they, too, are less notice-

WHERE TO FIND THEM

Golden Wentletraps are found on dendrophyllid cup corals throughout the tropical Indo-Pacific region from East Africa to the Americas.

able. And, that's not all. The Wentletrap stores toxins it absorbs from the coral and secretes them in a yellow exudate that repels predators.

When their hunger is sated, snails' thoughts turn to reproduction. The female produces masses of crenelated yellow eggs, then deposits them in the skeleton of the coral she has fed on, where they resemble a living polyp.

The smaller male is usually on or next to the shell of the female while she's busy laying the eggs. Occasionally, colonies of Golden Wentletraps cluster together in a mass feeding and reproductive frenzy. As the eggs hatch, the young drift off into the plankton before finally settling on the reef to establish a new colony among another group of cup corals. 🐟

The Golden Wentletrap



Once you've found them, these itty bitsy snails are hard to miss.

Each month *Skin Diver* looks back through its pages in search of those little nuggets of yesteryear—old equipment, trends of the time, new discoveries—that echo the times and may surprise or shock us. It's good to know your roots and how discoveries of old have helped shape diving of today.

1978

Stick 'Em Up!



At first glance this article appears to be about pulling off a major bank heist, but in reality, it's about divers battling cold water (*don't ask*). Hypothermia, as the article by Dennis Graver explains, is a silent enemy. Along with an increased air consumption and frequent urination (you have to do something to keep warm), the cold condition can also result in the inability to remember things or concentrate, and an increased risk for the bends. Divers who experience hypothermia may not know it until it's too late. The recommended precautions, such as drinking hot liquids and having a protein-rich breakfast, wearing booties and hooded vests, should be taken to keep divers toasty in chilly waters.



After all, "Cold slowly *robs* the diver of capability underwater." (*I couldn't resist.*) 🐟

1966

Womb to Tomb Diving

"What does age have to do with diving?" asks the article by Al Tillman. Good question, and back in 1966, the response went something like: "Yeah, those young punks come down with those girls' haircuts, how can you trust them to be responsible?" (*Wait 'til the seventies....*) Turns out NAUI didn't put much thought into it until 1962, when the age was lowered to 15 from 16 (an age originally set simply because it was the California drivers age limit). Tillman later proposes, "Imagine lowering the scuba age...to 10 years. ...We are letting pressure dictate our institutional behavior."



In 1999, 10 years old did indeed become the age limit for junior certification. The response to this might go something like: "Yeah, those motorized scooter peddling, beeper and baggy pant-wearing youths...love 'em." 🐟



1959

An Ode to Free Forum

"I'm 19 years old, I stand 5'6", weight 8½ stone and my measurements are 36-20-36." Sounds like we've flipped open to the personals section of *The Reader*, but instead, this letter can be found in the 1959 issue in the Driftwood section. Driftwood were pages reserved for readers' "notes, letters and stuff." My guess is this call for a "tall, dark and handsome pen-pal to write to me about his underwater adventures" falls under the "stuff" category. The letters in Driftwood were so varied, and often lengthy (one entitled "Hooray for Lethargic-Type [Dive] Clubs" went on for a half page), it was a free forum that readers obviously appreciated. For example, one reader sent in a photograph of a female companion in a dive suit (which was printed alongside the letter) and stated, "...On the female dive controversy: Let 'em dive.... Everything's a third BIGGER down there—like WOW! Besides, with a mouthpiece stuck in their mouths they can't even nag you." Nice. 🐟



Every day, divers are humbled by the sheer exhilaration of encountering marine life. From curious Calico Bass and playful dolphins, to sleek sharks and heart-stopping Humpback Whales—to be in their midst is the “stuff” of diving. So, each month, *Skin Diver* guest writers will relive their unique moments under the sea, leaving us at the edge of our seats and aching to get back in the water.

WE WERE SERIOUSLY AMONG THE WHALES. THREE thousand or so massive Humpbacks surrounded our vessel—mating, giving birth, leaping, spinning and generally freaking us out. But that’s what Humpbacks do. And that’s why we came. Each winter at the Dominican Republic’s Silver Bank, a remote coral horseshoe in the Atlantic, these behemoths enter the protected waters to do their thing.

My partner, Bret Gilliam, and I had chartered the *Turks and Caicos Aggressor* for a month in 1996 to take us to the whales.

Plus, I had somehow convinced National Geographic Explorer Television to send a film crew along with Boyd Matson, the host of the show, in hopes of filming Humpbacks mating or giving birth. Neither event had ever been seen, much less filmed, and that piqued their interest. Boyd’s perfectly coiffed hair and rugged good looks were a total washout underwater. But he looked good on the dive platform, so he had that going for him.

I called my buddy Dan “Duffer” Malone in Miami. Duffer had (and still has) the *Ocean Explorer*, a perfect boat for their six-person film crew, and he agreed to the 800-mile trek to the Silver Bank, where he’d collect Boyd and the bunch.

We’d already been at the Bank for three weeks when Duffer arrived. After a day or two of training Boyd in rebreathers, we loaded him and the cameras in the dinghy and set out hunting whales.

Whales tend to shy away from outboard engines, so we’d locate the whales, get ahead of them, cut the engines and let the wind blow us into their path. The method worked time and time again, but in each instance we had camera or dive gear problems. The underwater action proved elusive, but we had whales all around us, breaching, tail flapping, waving their pectoral fins and spy hopping. I can’t count how many times we were so close to their blow holes that we got slimed in fish-scented whale mucus. My wetsuit still has that faint aroma.

One afternoon, a huge male breached about a quarter mile away. And he was heading right at us. The camera rolled,

hoping for a second breach. It happened, the whale still coming directly toward us, and made a splash like a glacier dropping into the ocean. Great footage! To our surprise, the bull breached a third time, again with our 15-foot dinghy in its path. By now it was about 70 yards away, still a safe distance but coming at us with torpedo accuracy. The fourth breach shocked us. It was a mere 40 yards away, close enough for us to see the monster-sized, razor-sharp barnacles on its nose and pecs. We held our breath in quiet awe and hoped

the show was over. But no. Here it came again. On the fifth breach the whale towered above us like the Hindenburg, blocking out the sun. The spray from the splash filled the dinghy and soaked us to the bone. We knew a sixth breach would be the end. We’d be toast.



Whale Watching

And then the world went silent. It was gone.

For a minute we all sat dumbfounded, dripping like wet rats. Good thing the \$70,000 Betacams were safely in their housings. Boyd broke the silence.

“You got the shot, right?” he asked.

The cameraman just shook his head from side to side.

“Camera broke,” he said and quietly began to sob.

And so it goes with filming wild animals. Sometimes you get the shot, but most times you don’t. We never got the mating or birthing sequences and to this day, neither has anyone else. In fact, to my knowledge, no one’s ever seen a Humpback birth or mating ritual. But we’re pretty sure they do it ‘cause they got calves to prove it.

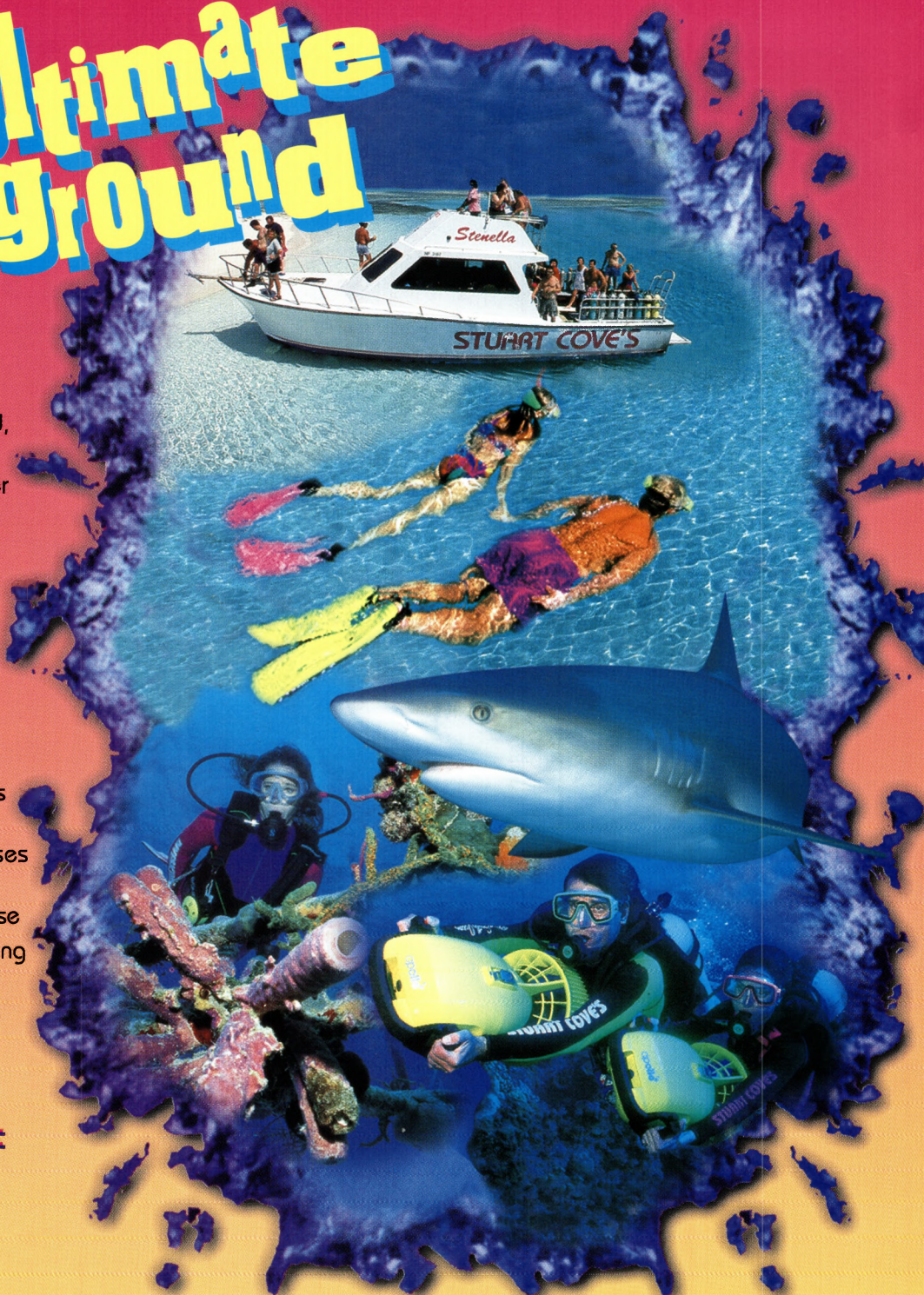
Postscript On the last day I got up at sunrise and convinced the captain to take me on a quick whale jaunt while everyone else slept. I left the rebreather and grabbed my mask, fins and snorkel for maximum sleekness. Within five minutes, a mother and calf came alongside the dinghy. I played with them for 45 minutes and banded off 36 frames. Unfortunately, National Geo couldn’t make a show from 35 mm photos. —BY FRED D. GARTH

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